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TO RAISE MEANS FOR THE ERECTION
OF A
PROTESTANT FEMALE COLLEGE,
IN
GREENSBURG, KENTUCKY.

REV. THOMAS P. AKERS
EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

LOUISVILLE:
MORTON & GRISWOLD, PRINTERS.

1851.

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P R E F A C E.

THE circumstances that led to the publication of this volume of Sermons, are briefly and definitely stated in the subjoined preamble and resolution, which was passed by the members of the Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Cumberland Presbyterian Churches, assembled in Greensburg, Ky., on the 25th of July, 1850.

Whereas—Preliminary steps are being taken, by members of the Roman Church, to establish in our village a seminary for the education of Protestant females; and whereas, we believe, that the minds of young ladies, who attend Catholic schools, are likely to be biased by the Roman religion; therefore,

Resolved—That we, the citizens of Greensburg, do feel it our imperative duty, to make a *united* effort, and, if possible, preoccupy the position, by building thereon a *Protestant Female College*.

In order to bring about a union of effort, the following suggestion was made, and unanimously approved, viz.: "That the churches before mentioned, be, and are hereby requested, to call each a meeting of their official membership, instructing them to appoint four corresponding committees, whose duty it shall be

to address letters to six distinguished ministers of their respective denominations, requesting them to contribute, severally, a manuscript sermon to a book, which we will publish and sell, with a view to raise funds, to aid in carrying out the proposed enterprise."

In compliance with the above request, meetings were called, committees appointed, and letters addressed to the requisite number of ministers, who promised, with but one exception, to furnish the desired manuscripts.

On the strength of their promises, we commenced, immediately, the publication of the work. And, though most of the matter was received, according to promise, still, a variety of circumstances has retarded our progress in taking the first edition through the press. Some of those who furnished sermons were unavoidably delayed by other and more imperious duties; and some who had promised a contribution failed,* in the end, to furnish it. To surmount all these difficulties, and to fit the whole work for the press, required more time and labor, than

* On account of these failures, we have prepared (amid numerous interruptions) a brief essay, which is added in the form of a supplement. As the completion of the work was a matter of importance, the supplementary essay was written hastily, and, claims on that account, but little for its originality of matter, or its purity of style.

we had, at first, expected. We hope, however, that its tardy appearance will be attributed wholly to a desire, on our part, to make the book all that we have promised it should be. In the belief that it will even *surpass* those promises, and *more* than meet the public expectation, we now offer it as a contribution to the cause of Protestantism.



S E R M O N S

S E R M O N I.

CHRIST THE AUTHOR OF SALVATION.

BY REV. JOSHUA SOULE, D.D.,

Senior Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.”—Heb. v. 9, 10.

IN the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Apostle points out the difference between the Law and the Gospel, the dispensation of Moses and the dispensation of Jesus Christ; and shows wherein the latter is superior to the former. He first asserts the superior dignity and authority of Christ by virtue of his Sonship. As Son, he was heir of all things; all worlds were created by him and for him. And to the Son he saith, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” Moses, as a servant, was faithful in all his house; but Christ, as a Son, over his own house. Hence, as the *Son of God*, he has a glory infinitely superior to Moses and to all angels; having obtained, by virtue of his relation to the Father, a more excellent name than

they. Having drawn the comparison between Moses and Christ, the Apostle proceeds to notice the difference between the priesthood under the law, and the priesthood of Christ. In regard to the former, it was imperfect. The priests themselves were peccable, and needed to offer sacrifices for their own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. They were not suffered to continue, by reason of death, and therefore that order of priesthood required a continual succession of priests. The sacrifices offered under the law were weak and inefficient, and could never make the comers thereunto perfect; for it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should put away sin, or purify the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God. And finally, that the various offerings under the Levitical priesthood had no virtue in themselves, but were only types and figures of the great and perfect sacrifice of Christ, and that the whole economy of that dispensation, whether legal or ceremonial, was designed to "vanish away," when Christ assumed his offices of law-giver and priest over his own house.

To point out more clearly the nature and perfection of Christ's priesthood, the Apostle refers to the history of his illustrious type, Melchisedec, according to whose order Christ was constituted a priest for ever.

In introducing Melchisedec as a priest of the Most High God, living in the days of Abraham, and consequently anterior to the constitution of the priesthood under the law, and after whose order Christ was made a priest, the Apostle designs to show that Christ, as a priest, was greater than Aaron, and that his priesthood was entirely distinct and separate from the Levitical. To the first point he says, that Melchisedec was greater than Abraham, for he blessed Abraham, and without contradiction, the less is blessed of the better. Now consider how great.

this man was, to whom even the Patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils, and to whom Levi also, who was the father of the priestly tribe, paid tythe; for he was in the loins of his father Abraham when Melchisedec met him.

In order more clearly to establish the entire distinction of Christ's priesthood from the order of Aaron's, and to show that, according to divine appointment, or, the oath by which Christ was made a priest, there was to be no connection between the house of Levi, or the line of his priesthood and the priestly office of Christ, the Apostle says of Melchisedec, who was the special type of Christ, as a priest, that "he was without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life;" "but" (in this respect) "made like unto the Son of God," abideth a priest continually—having neither lineal predecessor nor successor in office.

The ordinary interpretation of this passage is far from being satisfactory. It can hardly be supposed, that such a writer as St. Paul would employ such strength and sublimity of language merely to inform his readers of a simple fact, with which they must have been previously acquainted, and of which no one could be ignorant who had read the Book of Genesis, viz: that Moses, in the sacred history, had furnished no account of the genealogy or pedigree of Melchisedec, having made no mention of his parents or his children. Nor is it easy to perceive how the Apostle could employ the *silence* of the sacred historian, either in illustration or confirmation of his premises. Again; if this be the sense of the Apostle in this remarkable passage, it requires that the comparison between Melchisedec and Christ, so far as it is embraced in this text, should consist in the silence of the sacred records relative to their genealogy; but here the comparison cannot

hold, for, however silent the author of the Pentateuch may be, relative to the generation of Melchisedec, the evangelical historians have given us a minute and very circumstantial account of the lineage of Christ, even from Adam, together with his birth, life, and death. To suppose that the comparison of the Apostle lies between the silence of history with regard to Melchisedec and the real character of Christ, as being without father as to his human nature, and without mother as to his divine, savors more of curious and foreign speculation, than of that strength, fitness, and force of sentiment with which the writings of our Apostle abound. In view of the Apostle's premises, and the necessary agreement of his positions with those premises, it may be justly doubted whether the silence of Moses with regard to the pedigree of Melchisedec, or the circumstance of Christ being without father in relation to his humanity, and without mother as to his divinity, ever occupied his thoughts. To say the least—neither appears to have any connection with his subject, or to afford any illustration of it. The Apostle's ground is—Christ is not a priest in the Levitical lineage, or after the order of Aaron; if he were so, it would establish and perpetuate that order of priesthood, and, consequently, the law under which the priesthood existed. But the priesthood is changed, and, consequently, there is made a change also of the law. Both being parts of the same economy, they were designed to run parallel with each other, and “vanish away” together. To establish this ground, the Apostle refers to the 110th Psalm, in which it is said, “The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.” Now Melchisedec, after whose order Christ was made priest, was without father, without mother, in the tribe of Levi, to which tribe the priesthood appertained; without

descent from the loins of Levi, who was the father of the priestly order, for even Levi was in the loins of his father Abraham when Melchisedec met him; consequently, he could have no lineal connection with the order of the Levitical priesthood, for he exercised the office of priest by the immediate appointment of God, long before that order existed. "Without beginning of days or end of life;" he neither began nor ended his life or office in the order of the Levitical priesthood, but in all these respects was made like unto the Son of God. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident; for that, after the similitude of Melchisedec, there ariseth another priest. And he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. And being thus constituted, he abideth a priest for ever, having no lineal successor. This, we conceive, to be the true sense of the passage. The conclusion is, that the priesthood being changed from the tribe of Levi to the tribe of Judah, from Aaron to Christ, the whole dispensation of Moses is antiquated, and Christ is both law-giver and priest. His priesthood is perfect and unchangeable, and his throne is established for ever. He is a perfect and eternal Saviour. Through him alone we have access to God. The redemption of the world is by the blood of his sacrifice, and eternal life is his purchase and his gift. And as there is no office which Christ sustains in the grand economy of redemption, which is not replete with interests of the most momentous concern to fallen and guilty man, let us enter upon the subject before us with fervent prayer, that the Holy Spirit may enlighten our understanding and lead us to Jesus, our perfect and eternal Saviour.

The text presents us with three important points for consideration :—

I. In what sense Jesus Christ was made perfect, and in what this perfection consists.

II. The salvation of which, being made perfect, he is the author.

III. The terms or conditions on which we are made partakers of this salvation.

I. In what sense Jesus Christ was made perfect, and in what this perfection consists.

1. It could not be said that Christ was made perfect in regard to his Divine nature. He possessed the perfection of Deity from everlasting, even the fulness of the Godhead. He was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God—being the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. Hence, every attribute of the Divine nature was perfect in him and could admit of no additional perfection or glory.

2. Neither could it be said of his moral righteousness, while he continued upon earth. His whole life exhibited the most perfect conformity to the will of God, as the rule of right; for he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. From the cradle to the tomb, he was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. Such was the purity, extent, and sublimity of the morality taught and practised by our blessed Saviour, that, in comparison, the decalogue itself had no glory, by reason of the glory that excelleth. In him there was never the slightest deviation from the immutable laws of righteousness, justice, and truth. The perfection, therefore, of which the Apostle speaks, is an *official* perfection, peculiar to his mediatorial character, and which he could not have possessed from eternity. Hence, Jesus is said to have been made a priest, and, as the captain of our salvation, to have been made

perfect; and in no other sense can the words apply to the Son of God.

To perfect Christ's official character, as mediator between God and men, it was necessary:—

First. That he should become incarnate, take upon him our nature, and appear in the likeness of sinful flesh. It was this assumption of humanity which qualified him for the great work of redeeming and saving a ruined world. The most ancient intimations of the divine counsel concerning man clearly embrace this doctrine. The *seed* of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. And, through a long succession of prophecies, the same promise was repeated under various forms. In the faith of these promises, patriarchs, prophets, and holy men waited for the advent of the Messiah; and when the period fixed in the counsel of Heaven was fulfilled, the eyes of thousands were directed to Bethlehem, where they saw the accomplishment of ancient predictions, the fulfilment of promises, and the infallible pledge of the love of God to a ruined world. Here God was manifested in the flesh; for verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, and was found in fashion as a man. Angels were not the objects of his mission, although they were the heralds of his manifestation. He came not to mediate between God and angels; had he done so, he would have taken their nature. Man was the object of his mediatorial work, and therefore he became man. But he assumed our nature, not as it was in its pristine state; but with its weakness and sorrows, the effects of the fall; for he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He was subject to hunger and thirst, to pain of body and of mind: he groaned in his spirit, and his soul was exceeding sorrowful. But why was Jesus Christ thus subject to the infirmities of our nature? Why was he tempted in all points like as

we are? The answer is, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest—a perfect mediator. In one word, he took upon him our entire nature, a real body and a rational soul, that he might be perfectly qualified to accomplish the mighty work of our salvation.

Second. To perfect the character of Christ as our mediator, it was needful that he should suffer. Being himself without sin, and perfectly innocent, his sufferings were not on his own account; for the law, which was holy, and just, and good, could never require a sinless creature to suffer for himself. Hence, as Christ had never sinned, whatever he suffered was on the account of man. Our sins were the true cause of his sufferings.

Of the nature of Christ's sufferings it becomes us to enquire with great caution, because it is evident that the inspired writings represent those sufferings as the ground of our salvation. If the death of Jesus is to be considered only as evidence of the truth of his doctrine, and an example of patience and fortitude, it is difficult to perceive why the sacred scriptures should set forth the death of Christ as having a special influence on human salvation; since many eminently holy men have suffered martyrdom in defence of the truth, and exhibited equal, yea, superior patience and fortitude. Jesus, in the garden, in anticipation of his approaching death, was in an agony, and three times prayed, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" but many of the martyrs gloried in prospect of their suffering, and rejoiced as the hour approached. Jesus on the cross said, "I thirst," and with a loud voice cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But which of the martyrs betrayed such weakness, even under the most excruciating tortures? They were either firmly and patiently silent, or triumphantly exulted in the midst of flames. The example of fortitude in extreme suffering,

is therefore rather in favor of the disciples than their master. The evidence of the truth of a cause, so far as martyrdom attests it, is increased by the firmness with which the martyr seals his testimony. Consequently, many of the apostles and confessors of Jesus have furnished stronger evidence in favor of Christianity, so far as their martyrdom for its sake is concerned, than was furnished by the death of its author. But there was verily a mystery in the cross of Christ. His sufferings were peculiar to himself, and such as no man ever did or ever can endure. The holy and innocent Jesus suffers and expires for a sinful and guilty world. His death is the redemption of ruined man. And it was the union of the divine nature with ours, which gave adequate value to the price. It was the altar of his divinity which sanctified the gift of his humanity. He was a child born, and a son given, yet was he the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the prince of peace. The sacrifice of Christ offered on the cross, was a true and proper atonement for sin, and it is on this account, and this only, that the sacred scriptures attach such importance to his death. View the death of the cross in any other light, and you involve prophets and apostles in the most palpable inconsistency, not to say absurdity. You strip Christianity of its essential character, and reduce it to a mere system of ethics. The doctrine of justification by faith in the blood of Jesus is nullified, and the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost are fabulous. The testimony of the prophets in regard to the nature of Christ's sufferings is clear and unequivocal. Although he was perfectly innocent, it pleased the Lord to bruise him—to make his soul an offering for sin—to put him to grief. He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace

in death on the cross was the beginning of
 atonement of Christ. He went into Hades & then suffered
 the pains of the second death. Then he walked
 with the spirits in prison. But his soul was not
 left in hell—neither did his flesh see corruption.
 "He chose out of the train of his soul" when

was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. For the transgression of my people was he stricken. He poured out his soul unto death—was numbered with the transgressors, and bore the sin of many. The sacrifices offered under the law, as they were figures of the sacrifice of Christ, establish the same thing. The offering of those sacrifices was an acknowledgement of the guilt and pollution of sin, and a legal atonement for it; for, without the shedding of blood there is no remission. But these sacrifices were shadows of good things to come, and pointed to the blood of Jesus, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Hence, the offering of Christ's body on the cross was a sin offering, and a sacrifice of atonement for the remission of transgression; and without such a sacrifice he could never have been our perfect high priest, or the captain of our salvation.

Let us examine, with particular care, the testimony of our Apostle on this very important subject. "He died for us—he gave himself a ransom for all—he died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God—he bore our sins in his own body on the tree—he purchased us with his own blood—we are bought with a price—he was crucified for our offences—we are pardoned, justified, and saved by his blood—he has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." To these quotations we might add many more of the same character, if it were necessary; but we pause to enquire, if any sober man can suppose that these passages mean no more than that Christ suffered for an example, and died as a martyr? The true doctrine of the Apostle is, that the death of Christ was the price paid for our redemption from under the curse of the law; and this redemption is the ground, and the only

ground of our salvation. The demands of the first covenant under which man was held were satisfied with this redemption price, and man released from its claims; and becoming the purchased inheritance, he was transferred to a gracious covenant. His original relations to the law were consequently disannulled, and he became obligated to Christ as his redeemer, lawgiver, and judge. From this view it will clearly appear, that the sufferings of Christ were essential to his mediatorial character, and that, as the captain of our salvation, he was made perfect by them. This was the ground of the Apostle's glorying, and the cause of his renouncing every other. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." This was the grand subject of his ministry. "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Here is the only foundation of every sinner's hope. The blood and righteousness of Jesus is his only successful plea. If the atoning sacrifice of his gracious Redeemer does not avail for him, he is lost, for ever lost!

Third. The character of Christ, as mediator between God and man, would have been imperfect, notwithstanding his sacrifice, had he been held captive by death, or seen corruption in the grave. To complete his mediatorial reign, death must be swallowed up in victory, and the grave spoiled of its dominion. A glorious and triumphant resurrection was, therefore, necessary to the perfection of his character. It was the demonstration of the truth of his doctrine, and the equity and validity of his claims; without which the whole system of Christianity had been imperfect. On this single point the Apostles and first ministers of Christ, with great fitness, chiefly rested their defence of the truth of their cause; and it would be well for all who are doubtful of the truth of Christianity, as well as professed Christians, frequently and carefully to

examine the evidences of the resurrection of the crucified Redeemer.

But this grand event in the history of Jesus, is not to be considered merely as demonstrative of the truth of his religion. It is more immediately and intimately connected with the condition and the destiny of man; for, he who *died* for our sins, rose again for our justification. That faith which is unto justification must not only embrace Christ crucified for us, but also Christ raised up from the dead. His resurrection, therefore, is the procuring cause of our being raised from the death of sin, to the life of righteousness. And, finally, the resurrection of Christ is the cause of the resurrection of the human body. Being risen from the dead, he has become the first fruits of them that slept.

Fourth. Even after his resurrection, had he remained on earth, he would not have been a priest, seeing there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. But our high priest must officiate in the true tabernacle, of which even the second tabernacle, under the law, was but the figure. Christ has ascended up on high, having led captivity captive, and received gifts for men. He has gone into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us. And being set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, he has become a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man. And being for ever set down on the right hand of God, as an advocate and intercessor, he ever liveth to make intercession for us. In his ascension he carried our nature, in mysterious union with his divinity, triumphantly to heaven, where, in this union of nature, he fills the office of Mediator, the right and authority of government being committed to him. In this mediatorial kingdom he will reign, till he shall have

put down all rule, and all authority, and power, adverse to his government; for he must reign, as Mediator, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, and the ends of his mediatorial reign fully accomplished, he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and be subject to him who put all things under him, that God may be all in all. Thus, by his incarnation, sufferings, resurrection, and ascension, was Jesus Christ constituted a perfect high priest and mediator.

II. Let us inquire, secondly, What is the salvation of which Christ, being made perfect, is the author?

The mediation of the Son of God is designed to affect materially both the natural and the moral world; even the entire constitution of the universe. For he, by whom the worlds were created, and all the hosts of them, saith, "Behold I create all things new," even the earth and the heavens. The elements themselves shall own him God, by the mighty change which he shall effect in them, at the restitution of all things. Nor are the grand revolutions designed to be produced in the material universe, by the reign of the Messiah, unconnected with the eternal felicity of the subjects of his moral government. But it concerns us more particularly, on the present occasion, to speak of the salvation of Christ with direct regard to man—to fallen, guilty, and corruptible man. And first, by the death of Christ, man is delivered from the penalty of the law, and entirely released from its obligations as a condition of life, a ground of condemnation, and a standard of judgment. Being bought off from the law, his relations and obligations are transferred to the gracious law of the Redeemer, which law only he is bound to obey; by which only he is either justified or condemned; and by which alone he will be judged at the last day. If man, being redeemed by

Christ, is not released from his obligations to the law; if the law has not relinquished its claims upon him by virtue of the death of his surety, it is difficult—not to say impossible, to conceive how his condition in regard to justification and eternal life is made better by the mediation of Christ. If the law has not released the transgressor, in consideration of the *price of redemption*; if he is still held under its penalties, and, consequently, under its obligations, it follows, of inevitable consequence, that the obligations must be fulfilled, or the penalties suffered. But the truth is, that the state of all men, being redeemed from the curse of the law, is a state of salvation—that the covenant under which all men are placed, is a gracious covenant—that the terms of life proposed to all men are such as are suitable to their condition as sinners; terms, which embrace man with all his impotency, his pollution, and his guilt; terms, which bring eternal life to his lowest state of weakness and helplessness. And in this consists the peculiar glory and perfection of the economy of human salvation. In the origin and establishment of this system of gracious economy, human agency had no participation. The grand plan of salvation was exclusively the “purpose of God”—the counsel of his will—his immutable counsel, according to which “he worketh all things;” from which he never departs, in the justification or glorification either of Jews or Gentiles. But, although the origin and establishment of this economy were independent of the agency of man, yet, in its operations and final results, human agency is deeply involved. On the great question, whether man should hold his relations, his obligations, and his responsibility, under the Adamic covenant, or under the covenant of grace, he was never consulted. His transfer from the first to the second, was exclusively the act of his gracious Redeemer. But whether he be a

partaker of the grace and glory which the Gospel covenant has provided, is a question clearly submitted to his own choice, and depending on his own will. But this will more fully appear in our subsequent remarks. Whatever this plan of the divine economy is designed to effect in regard to fallen man, either in his moral or physical nature—either with respect to his spiritual or material being, is involved in that *salvation* of which Christ is the author.

First. Salvation from sin; its guilt, its power, its pollution, its effects.

Man is a sinner; he is guilty before God; sin exerts a powerful dominion over him; he is led captive by it; the whole empire of the heart is polluted by it. These are positions so plain, and so fully attested by the oracles of God, that it is unnecessary to adduce proof. The Gospel provides a remedy for this ruined condition, first, in the removal of guilt. The remission of sin is one of the peculiar and distinguishing provisions of Christ's gracious government. It is an act in which the most important change is effected in the relation of a sinner to God. Previous to this great relative change, man is under condemnation, and the wrath of God abideth on him. He is continually exposed to all the fearful curses which God has threatened against the workers of iniquity. He is every moment liable to that dreadful punishment which awaits those who disobey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, "everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." But pardoning grace introduces him into the favor of God. All his past sins, however numerous or aggravated, are blotted out, and, in the estimation of the righteous Judge of all the earth, he stands acquitted and fully justified. What an amazing act of divine mercy is the forgiveness of our sins!

sins, which, unforgiven, must sink our wretched souls to the deepest hell, and involve us in all the fearful horrors of the worm that never dies, and of the fire which shall never be quenched! Blessed, indeed, is the man, whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.

Second. But if the grace of God in Christ Jesus, has made provision for the forgiveness of sin, it is equally efficacious in the destruction of its power. Sin is represented as a powerful tyrant, holding his subjects in captivity and chains. Under the control of the carnal mind, which is enmity to God, man is the servant—the slave of sin; sin has dominion over him; his whole nature is subject to its rule; his understanding is darkened; his conscience is seared; his passions and affections are disordered, and hostile to the divine government; his will is perverse; and even the members of his body are instruments of unrighteousness, and become efficient auxiliaries in the empire of sin and death. Let the soul be awakened to a consciousness of this mighty power of sin, and no marvel if it cry out, “Oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?” The answer must be, “Jesus Christ my Almighty Saviour.”

Christ has spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them by the death of the Cross. He has ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high, and led captive that which captivated the world before. In the establishment of his gracious kingdom in the hearts of men, he frees them from the law of sin and death—delivers them from the bondage in which they were held under the reign of their spiritual corruptions, and brings them into the liberty of the children of God. Sin shall have no more dominion over them. Its power is broken, and the captive is free.

What a mighty change in the condition of man! Where sin reigned unto death, grace now reigns through righteousness unto life—spiritual and eternal life. The mind which had been shut up in darkness and ignorance of God and itself, now bursts forth in the light of heavenly day, and exults in beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The heart, once the fountain of iniquity, and the abode of every earthly and sensual desire, now becomes the habitation of God, through the Spirit, and triumphs in the glorious liberty of the Gospel.

Third. But this is not the height of the salvation of Christ. He who of God is made to us wisdom and righteousness, is also made our sanctification and redemption. Sin has defiled our whole nature: it is a fountain of corruption: its stains are deep: it is like the Ethiopian's skin, or the leopard's spots: it is fixed deep in the soul. But the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin. He who, through the eternal Spirit offered himself, without spot, to God, for the redemption of the human soul, is able to purify the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. His blood is the fountain of purification, as well as the price of atonement; nor is it less efficacious in sanctifying than in justifying the soul. Every professed believer in Christ should be deeply sensible, that the mediation of the Son of God has made as ample provision for the entire sanctification of a fallen and polluted soul, as for the pardon of a guilty one. And that sanctification is as real and perfect, in regard to the pollution of sin, yea, to its very being, as justification is with respect to its guilt. So certain as the one restores us to the favor of God, the other conforms us to his image, even righteousness and true holiness. Well, therefore, may the whole household of faith fervently pray: "Cleanse thou the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we

may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Fourth. Salvation from death, and all the effects of sin. The doctrines of Christ afford a firm foundation for faith and hope, in the midst of the physical disorders which we discover in the material world, and especially in our own bodies. That these disorders are the effects of sin—that death, in all its forms, has entered into the world in consequence of the transgression of the law of God, is so obvious as to require no proof in a Christian assembly. That the mediatorial government of Jesus Christ has provided a remedy for these disorders, is equally true. If "the creation" itself is made subject to vanity, that subjection is not without hope. While we groan, being burdened with the "house of clay" in its present condition, we wait for "mortality to be swallowed up of life," in the redemption of our bodies. The resurrection of the dead, even all who sleep in the dust of the earth, is infallibly secured by the resurrection of Christ. In this great event, death shall be swallowed up in victory, and the triumph of God's Messiah over his empire be completed.

But how different will be the constitution and circumstances of the bodies of the children of the first resurrection, from their condition in the present mode of existence! Now, weakness, corruption, and dishonor, closely adhere to these earthly tabernacles; then, power, immortality, and glory, shall be their attributes. Now, they are the seats of pain, of sickness, and of sorrow; then, they shall suffer no more—be weary, sick, or faint, no more. Then the fountains of grief, of lamentation, and woe, shall be for ever dried up. Oh! amazing deliverance! even into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Oh! most merciful Father and Almighty Redeemer, may

the speaker and his hearers have a part in the first resurrection; for, over such the second death shall have no power.

Finally. The salvation of which Christ is the author, is, emphatically, *eternal*. It embraces the state of endless happiness, to which the saints shall be restored in the "restitution of all things." Of this state we can form but very imperfect ideas, while we continue in this earthly house of our tabernacle. What a grand revolution will take place in the empire of intellect. Here, we know but little of God, or the constitution of spiritual beings; there, shall we know even as we are known. Here, we see imperfectly—as in a mirror; there, with open face. The deep things of God, in the economy of redemption and the mysteries of Providence, concerning which, in our present state, we are constrained to exclaim, "How unsearchable are his counsels, and his ways past finding out!" will then be clearly developed. What are now matters of faith, will then be subjects of knowledge. Nor will the improvement of the intellectual powers be greater than that of the organs of sense and of motion. What an amazing and delightful thought, that in the heavenly state, when the Almighty energy shall have "made all things new," the bodies of the saints—bodies now vile and corruptible—shall be like the glorious body of our Lord Jesus Christ. What clearness, what strength, what extent of vision! what power, what activity of motion! will that "glorious body" possess. The supreme felicity of this state will consist in the perfect adaptation of whatever appertains to the "new heaven and new earth," to the constitution and powers of the children of the resurrection. No disordered, or conflicting elements; no alternation of burning heat and chilling cold; no weariness, sickness, pain, or death, is felt or feared in heaven. No

hunger nor thirst is there ; for, the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water. In a word, the fullness of God and of the Lamb shall be the measure, and eternity the duration of the happiness of the saints. To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father ; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

III. It remains for us to consider, lastly, the terms, or conditions, on which we are made partakers of this salvation.

It is ardently desired that this inquiry may be a matter of individual interest, as concerns of the utmost importance to every human soul are incorporated in it. Whether our present and eternal salvation depend entirely on an agency independent of ourselves—independent of any voluntary actions ; or, whether something is required of us as indispensably necessary to salvation, is a subject which addresses itself so clearly and directly to our understanding and our consciences, and, at the same time, embraces such momentous personal interests, as to render it difficult to conceive how we can consider it merely as a point of theory, or as an abstract question. Every view which we are able to take of it, demand that we examine it with direct reference to the state of our hearts, and the character of our actions. We had occasion to observe, in treating a different point in our subject, that the relations, obligations, and responsibilities of man, were transferred from the covenant of works—the legal economy, to the covenant of grace—the economy of the Gospel ; and that this transfer was by virtue of the redemption of Christ. This is the ground work of salvation. For, if the claims and obligations of the first covenant are still in force, and

man is held under them, the conditions of life are impracticable, and, consequently, the end impossible to a sinner. It is equally certain, that if there are any of our sinful race who are not redeemed by Christ, that salvation is impossible to them; and for this plain reason—that not being redeemed, or bought off from the law, they remain under a covenant, the conditions of which they are totally unable to fulfil. But, thanks be to God, that he who tasted death for every man, and gave himself a ransom for all, has brought in a better covenant, under which God has promised to be merciful to our unrighteousness, and to remember our sins and iniquities no more. It is into this covenant we must look for the terms of our salvation.

The law and the gospel agree in this—that they both require obedience as the condition of life, and annex the penalty of death to disobedience. But they differ widely in regard to the character of the obedience they require. The obedience required by the law was suitable to the condition of an innocent and holy creature, and such as a sinner could never perform. But the obedience required by the gospel is suited to the condition of a guilty and polluted creature, and such as can never apply to any but sinners. This obedience is summed up, and comprehensively expressed by “the righteousness of faith,” as distinguished from the “righteousness of the law.” And it is the distinguishing character of the gospel, that it provides for, and accepts such a righteousness, as the condition of salvation. Hence, according to our Apostle, under the gospel economy, the righteousness of faith is reckoned or counted to man in the place of the righteousness of law, which he had lost by transgression. And this is the sum of the Apostle’s doctrine of “imputed righteousness.” Having thus far considered what we conceive to be fundamental principles in the system of human salvation—principles

which constitute the excellency and perfection of the gospel, it remains for us more particularly to inquire into the nature of that obedience on which, as a condition, salvation is suspended. Repentance of sin, is expressly declared by Jesus Christ to be indispensably necessary to salvation. The laws of his kingdom enjoin it on every sinner. He has established it, as an immutable rule of his government, that "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Repentance of a sinner, which is unto life, and to which promise of pardon is made, implies a conviction of sin—a consciousness of pollution and guilt. It implies confession of sin. The prodigal appears in character as a repenting sinner, in his confession, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee." It implies a deep sense of unworthiness. The language of penitence is, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son." It implies a penitential sorrow on the account of sin. The repenting sinner bewails his transgressions, and weeps bitterly for his sins. And, finally, it implies the forsaking of sin, breaking off from iniquity, turning away from transgression, putting away the evil of our doings. This repentance, too, must be sincere, not feigned; must be deep, not superficial; must extend to all our sins, not some particular offences only. It is one of the most consoling truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ, that the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, and whose name is Holy, looks down from heaven, and approves this exercise of repentance in the heart of the sinner; that the bowels of infinite mercy move toward him; that the attributes of God are pledged in the very constitution of his gracious kingdom—even his truth and justice—to pardon such a confessing sinner. What fulness of mercy is here! What grace! What abounding grace is here! The very chief of sinners is not excluded from these gracious terms of life.

Faith in Christ is a condition of salvation, and an essential part of evangelical obedience. Except ye believe that I am he, said Jesus Christ, ye shall die in your sins. "He that believeth, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." And in answer to the great question, "What must I do to be saved?" the important, but simple direction is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." But faith, as it is the exercise of obedience to Christ, and a condition of salvation, is a clear and firm persuasion of the divinity of Christ's person; of the truth of his doctrines, and the validity of his claims. It is a steadfast reliance on the efficacy of his atoning sacrifice for the remission of sin, and acceptance with God; and, consequently, implies the renouncing all other grounds of justification. It is a cordial and voluntary submission of ourselves to Christ in all the offices he sustains; receiving him as our prophet, priest, and king; taking his yoke upon us, and submitting to his government. In this view, the "righteousness of faith" implies all that Christ has included in the terms of discipleship. "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Short of this no man has the faith which is unto salvation. Dost thou believe that Jesus is the Son of God? Thou doest well, for without this thou canst not be saved. But devils believe this also, and believing they tremble: yet are they not saved. Thy faith must be unto obedience, or it will profit thee nothing. Thy whole heart must be given to Christ in faith. If thou believest with thy heart unto righteousness, thou shalt be saved. If thou dost not thus believe, the wrath of God abideth on thee.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself," is the sum of Christian obedience,

and the fulfilment of the law of Christ. "If ye love me," said Jesus Christ, "keep my commandments;" and if ye keep my commandments, "ye shall abide in my love." On this obedience of Christ's law, our eternal salvation is suspended. Without it, no man can be saved. With it, no man can fail of salvation.

It remains only to answer an objection to the doctrine proposed, and close with a few practical observations.

The objection to be answered, lies against the view we have taken of the economy of the gospel or new covenant, as embracing conditions of salvation, and requiring obedience, on the part of man, as necessary to justification and eternal life. It is urged by the objector, that "this doctrine excludes grace, and makes salvation a matter of debt; because, where conditions are imposed as requisite to the attainment of some promised good, the fulfilment of the conditions obliges the other party to make good the promise. It follows, that if obedience is required as a condition of justification, and eternal life, under the gospel, then God is obliged, on the performance of this obedience by a sinner, to justify and save him. Is not this making the reward to be, not of grace, but of debt? Is it not, to all intents and purposes, "salvation by works?" We have not proposed this objection, on account of any formidable difficulties it contains; for, it is weak—exceedingly weak. But we state and examine it, because of its popular influence, and, we fear, dangerous tendency. Our Lord, and his inspired Apostles, must have understood perfectly the economy of the salvation of sinners contained in the gospel covenant. This objection, then, will be fully answered, if it clearly appear from the authority of the New Testament Scriptures, first—that the salvation of sinners is by grace; and, secondly—that something is required on the part of sinners, in order to salvation;

something without which salvation cannot be obtained, and with which salvation is certain. Now, that these two grand points are clearly laid down in the oracles of God, admits of such proof, yea, of such demonstration, as to render it difficult to conceive how either of them should ever have been doubted by any man professing to believe in the truth of Divine revelation. On the first point, that the salvation of sinners is by grace, it is necessary to say but little, because it is not in dispute. Two passages shall suffice. "By grace are ye saved." This applies with equal fitness to every part of the system of salvation. It is of grace, that man—fallen man, was bought off from the law. It is of grace, that he is placed under a law suited to his condition as a sinner. It is of grace, that he is pardoned, regenerated, sanctified, and finally glorified; all of which were impossible to him on the ground of the Adamic law. We, therefore, cordially agree to inscribe on every stone in the perfect fabric of our salvation, "By grace are ye saved."

"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt; but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." A stronger passage is not to be found in all the book of God, in confirmation of the blessed doctrine of salvation by grace. If man obtain the reward of the inheritance of the kingdom of God, he must either obtain it on the ground of the first covenant—the law of works; or on the ground of the second covenant—the law of the Mediator. He cannot obtain it on the first ground, because the title is forfeited in the violation of the bond; and, consequently, the claim cannot be sustained on the immutable principle of law—"Pay me what thou owest." He must therefore obtain it on the second ground, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." But, does this doctrine

of salvation by grace, exclude human agency? Has the counsel of redeeming mercy made man a machine, that it may make him a saint? In no part of the scheme of salvation does the grace of God more clearly appear, than in restoring man to a state of trial, under a dispensation the terms of which are conformable to his condition, and completely within his power. But the Gospel of Jesus Christ requires something of man as a condition of his salvation; something without which he cannot be saved, and which being performed secures that end.

The general tenor of the New Testament Scriptures sustains this position. It is every where apparent in the teaching of the Author of the Gospel. It is one of the most prominent features of his parables. It was incorporated, in the most explicit form, in the grand commission which he gave to his disciples after his triumphant resurrection, and just before his ascension into heaven, to perpetuate and perfect the designs of his mediatorial government. What a solemn, and deeply interesting truth—deeply interesting to every fallen child of Adam—did this commission contain! “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” How clearly does it appear, from this passage, as well as from many others, that the “obedience of faith,” as a condition, is required by the gospel covenant, as necessary to the inheritance of that “eternal salvation,” of which *Christ is the Author*.

In conclusion—What a deep and eternal interest has every child of man, in the “great salvation” provided by the mediation of the Son of God, and secured, by immutable promises, to all those who obey Him. It is only in the light of eternity, that the value of the gain or loss of the gospel salvation will fully appear. If we gain it, we gain a “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” If

we lose it, we lose all that can render *immortality* a blessing, and involve ourselves in the fearful punishment of those "who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." "How shall we escape, (these punishments) if we neglect so great salvation?" Who will presume to answer this important question? Who will show us any other medium of access to God, but the sacrifice of the cross—any other availing intercessor, or advocate, but our "great High Priest, who has passed into the heavens, where He ever liveth to make intercession for us?" His blood and righteousness we make our only plea. We look to Jesus, and to him alone, *as the author*, and finisher of our faith.

But to none will His sacrifice or intercession be availing in their "eternal salvation," but to those who receive Him in all His mediatorial offices; and, obeying from the heart that form of doctrine which He has delivered to them, "work out their salvation with fear and trembling." Let us, then, be up and doing—working while the day lasts; knowing that the night cometh, in which no man can work. "Behold, *now* is the accepted time: behold, *now* is the day of salvation." *Amen.*

SERMON II.

THE NATURE OF SAVING FAITH.

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“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”—Gal. v. 6.

“Purifying their hearts by faith.”—Acts xv. 9.

Two methods of salvation have, at different times, been proposed to mankind. One of these is by the law, and the other is by the gospel. The ultimate principles on which these two plans proceed, are essentially the same; the gospel, no less than the law, being founded in truth and righteousness. But the terms which they propound to mankind, are essentially different. The law demands obedience as the condition on which it will administer its rewards, and threatens disobedience with its penalties. Its language is, “The man that doeth these things, shall live by them.” Its further language is, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” This, then, is, in four words, the idea of the law—obedience rewarded, disobedience punished.

Now the gospel comes to those who have sinned, and have, for sin, been condemned; and proposes to save them in another method, and on peculiar terms. It introduces a new idea, the principle of faith. Its language is, “Whosoever believeth shall be saved.” Its further

language is, "Whosoever believeth not shall be damned." This, then, is, in a few words, the proposition of the gospel—the believer saved, the unbeliever destroyed. Belief, therefore, or faith, occupies, under the gospel, the place which obedience holds under the law. If you would be saved by the law, you must obey it: if you would be saved by the gospel, you must believe it.

Now, WHAT IS FAITH? I enter into no argument to show the importance of this question. Our salvation depends upon the possession of this grace, and a mistake in respect to it may be fatal. I propose, in this discourse, to institute an inquiry into the nature of the faith which saves the soul. I shall conduct the investigation by stating its most important elements, as they are disclosed in the Word of God.

First. I will speak of its *foundation*. It rests on the testimony of God.

Our whole knowledge is derived from three sources. One of these is our personal experience. We gain an acquaintance with the external world by the use of the senses. We see the forms of things, we hear the voices they utter, we feel their pressure, we taste the delicious fruit, we smell the fragrant flower. Consciousness reveals to us the world within—the intellect, the passions, the conscience, and the free and noble will. We repose the fullest confidence on the testimony of our senses respecting outer life, and on the testimony of consciousness respecting the inner life. This confidence is faith in our personal experience.

The circle of our information is greatly widened by what we learn from other men. We see through their eyes, and hear through their ears, and reach conclusions through the processes of their understandings. We have not seen Calcutta, or Jerusalem; we have not stood on

the banks of the Euphrates, or the Jordan; no living man has seen the temple of Solomon; yet, none doubt that these cities and rivers are, and that this temple once was. We have not searched into the grounds and principles of the sciences, yet we admit their facts and conclusions on the authority of the learned. This is faith in human testimony. On it rests our knowledge of whatever lies beyond the narrow limits of our own personal observation, and within the sphere of human sense and reason. The man is insane, or idiotic, who refuses to credit human testimony. He can know nothing of history, and comparatively nothing of passing events. He who loves any truth well enough to die for it, would as readily stake his life on facts ascertained by the testimony of others, as on those of which he is himself the witness.

But the domains of human knowledge enlarge immeasurably, when we receive as true the testimony of God. Now, we hear of past events, which were otherwise unknown. We learn that the world was made by the word of God's power, not from the testimony of our own experience, nor from the testimony of other men, but from that of the Creator himself. "By faith, we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." The creation of angels, their original brightness, their apostacy, and their ruin—being thrust down to hell; the creation of man, his uprightness, paradise, the tree of life, the fruit of the forbidden tree, the mortal taste, his expulsion from Eden, his first experience of an earth cursed, of a body dying, and a soul debased and lost; all these things are known to us by the testimony of God only.

That testimony reveals to us, also, coming events. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." This we believe by faith alone, for the human reason can detect no germ of life in the dissolving dust; nor can it discover a

ray of light in the dark precincts of the grave; nor are we endowed with the prophetic vision which, outrunning the deductions of reason, foresees the resurrection of the dead. We know, also, that God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world; that the heavens and earth will flee away before the terrors of that scene; that the righteous and the wicked will stand before the bar of Christ, he sitting as God, because he is God; that the wicked shall depart from him into hell, and the righteous ascend with him into heaven. We know that these things will come, and will not tarry. We look, we hasten unto their approach, believing in the testimony of God.

In like manner we realize the existence of an unseen world. It is not the object of sense, nor is it discoverable by reason, but it is made known by the word of God. The Almighty now reigns in light inapproachable, yet we see no shining token of his glory. Christ, also, sits at the right hand of God, but we cannot gaze in upon his royal robe, nor upon his brow, on which are many crowns. "*Whom, not having seen, we love.*" Heaven, while I speak these words, opens its gates of pearl upon streets of gold and waters of life, but we cannot catch a glimpse of its unfading splendor. Hell, also, rears its gloomy walls, and shoots up its lurid flames, yet we see not even the smoke of its torment. No vision of either world shines upon the mortal eye; no echo from either, the world of song or the world of wailing, breaks upon the ear. These are objects not of sense, nor reason, but of faith in the testimony of God.

Having thus discovered the foundation on which saving faith rests, we now mention,

Secondly, *its object*. The characteristic, controlling object which is apprehended by saving faith, is the Lord Jesus Christ. You believe that God made the worlds.

You do well: this is an historical faith. You believe that God will raise the dead, and judge them by that man whom he hath ordained. This is well: it is a faith in the vision of prophecy. You believe in the reality of an eternal state. This, too, is well: it is a faith in the Unseen. But there is a faith, higher, holier, more influential still—a faith in Christ. It is a grace, by which you “receive and rest upon him alone for salvation.” If you have this grace you are convinced, first, that you are sinners, justly condemned and lost; next, that you cannot recover yourselves, nor can all other creatures recover you out of your lost condition, nor will even God himself, out of Christ, save you: then you are persuaded that Christ is able and willing to save; further, you do rest upon him, and cleave to him for salvation, rejoicing to be saved by his grace, and to be governed by his commands; and further still, you embrace the promises and tremble at the threatenings of God, for this life and for that which is to come; “accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone, for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.” Such is the faith which saves. By that you recognize your sin, and your Saviour; you confess your guilt, and cleave to him who died to atone for it; you apprehend Christ, and apprehending, trust him, and trusting, love him, and loving, rejoice in him. That is the principle which, implanted and sustained in the heart, by the Spirit of God, renders your salvation, I do not say possible, but certain; nay, inevitable; nay, more, it renders the contrary eternally impossible, just as it is impossible for God to lie.

Thirdly. *This faith is an active principle.* Our text uses a strong term to express this sentiment:—“Faith that *worketh*.” Now men believe many truths, and believe them firmly, which exert over them no controlling power,

The sublime truths, for example, taught by the astronomer, are believed by every man who has investigated the science, and by multitudes who take them on trust. It is unquestionably true, that the planets are at given distances from the sun; that they revolve in their orbits, and around their centres in certain fixed periods; that the earth is one of these planets, and turns daily on its axis, and moves, yearly, through its pathway in the sky; that the fixed stars are suns, and are at immeasurable distances from us, and from each other. These truths are generally received, yet they do not "work" in your bosoms. You do not love or hate either God or man, nor do you choose or refuse the good or the evil in consequence of believing them. They make you no better and no worse, indeed, in no respect, morally, different from him who rejects these facts and theories, and holds by the old system of astronomy. In the same spirit many men receive the truths of religion. They believe that God made the worlds; that God will even judge the world; that there is a heaven and a hell; that Christ lived; that he died; yea, rather, that he is risen again; that he is even at the right hand of God, and maketh intercession for the saints. Yet their belief in these things is a dormant, or even a dead faith; it works not.

Here, then, we discover one of the essential elements of saving faith. It is a living, active principle. It is like leaven, hidden in the meal, but working therein, until it leavens the whole lump. Although faith be lodged in the heart, it does not sleep there. It is full of energy and outbursting strength. It is, in this respect, like the principle of the natural life, a secret, subtle substance, we know not what, hidden we know not where, coming and going we know not how, yet working in every joint and member of the human body. It glistens in the eye, it glows in the cheek, it whispers or thunders in the voice, it

swells in the bosom, it leaps in the pulse, it gives to the hand its cunning, and to the foot its swiftness; it rages in the tumult of human passion, and smiles on the peaceful scene when the storm is over. Now, you must not think it strange, that a religious faith is also a life, a vital principle. You should not deem this one of the incomprehensibles of Christianity. Patriotism works in the bosom where its sacred fire is kindled. Parental love is something more than a fond idea; it works where it abides. Your love of the world is no inert, dormant abstraction, slumbering in your bosoms. It is alert, and enterprising, and energetic, working ever, we fear, to your undoing. If you hate your enemies, that is a wild and furious passion, and not a mere conception resting on the heart, like the shadow on a rock. It is full of vitality. It plagues your enemies and torments yourself.

We do not speak mysteries, therefore, when we say that faith, like other principles in the soul, good and bad, is clothed with activity and power, and that it discovers its earnest nature by appropriate manifestations. From the fact of its activity, we turn to consider,

Fourthly, *the method by which it works*. "It worketh by love." There are several emotions through which the human will is swayed. The most influential are these three: Hope, Fear, and Love. Hope has vast power over man. In the ordinary affairs of life, it enables him to overcome difficulties, which were otherwise insurmountable. In the religious experience, a good hope is declared in Scripture to be "the anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast." And, "we are saved by hope." A being without hope, is a being without God in the world. Yet this is said of the Christian hope only, as it is associated with other graces. We need other bonds to hold us to our allegiance, besides the single bond of hope. This

principle contemplates objects that are afar off—in a distant world and in a future state. We are, by reason of sin, at so great a distance from God, that we feel but feebly the drawings of the heavenly world; like stars, shooting so far away from their spheres, as to lose, almost, the attractions of the central body. We need, therefore, a faith which, associated with hope, works by another and more controlling principle of grace.

Fear has wonderful power over the soul. The law addresses our fears, and God has given us fears to be addressed. It is but an empty boast of the wicked man, that he is not afraid of hell. Let him but realize the truth; let hell be uncovered before him, and it is not in human nature, it is not in any created nature, though of higher and firmer structure than that of man, to feel no fear. Sinners are not afraid, because they do not believe. The devils believe, and they tremble. These have the faith of an appalling experience, by which they know that there is a hell; and the faith of appalling guilt, by which they know that they cannot escape from its torments; a faith that works by fear, a terrible and excruciating faith. This is just the faith of the wicked. So far as they believe, they are miserable. They see nothing in religion but gloom, nothing in Christ but a final judge, nothing in God but a consuming fire. They choose not to believe; or if the truth force itself on their consciences, they try to drown its voice in care, or pleasure, or wickedness.

Far different in its nature and effects is the principle of love. It is not like fear, filling the mind with terror; nor is it like hope, fastening itself on some far-away good, which it must wait for, long and patiently. It realizes vividly the excellencies of its object. It discovers things invisible, and brings distant objects near. The Apostle expressly states, that love is better than hope, and better

than faith, in itself considered. "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love."

Faith, working by hope, is often enfeebled by the remoteness and dimness of the things hoped for. Faith, working by fear, brings eternity near to the soul; it summons forth, from the dark bosom of the future, all frightful forms and visions, all dreadful wailings and cries. Faith, working by love, does what hope cannot do; it makes the world to come a present and vivid reality;

"Far into distant worlds she pries
And brings eternal glories near."

And further, unlike fear, which terrifies the soul, love wins its affections; it teaches the heart to shoot forth its tendrils and to bind up itself with holy objects. God is love. He that loveth is born of God. A faith that works by love, assimilates the heart to God. This remark, however, introduces another topic.

Fifthly. *The effect of saving faith on its subject.* The Scripture which we have adopted into our text from the Acts of the Apostles, teaches us that, by this grace, God "purifies the heart." This is a capital point in the case. It tests both the genuineness of faith and the power with which it worketh.

Let us analyse the process. First, faith brings near to the believer spiritual objects. It brings Christ near with his atoning blood. It brings heaven near with its purity and its joy. Next, it enables the mind to discern these. The natural man cannot comprehend them, they being spiritually discerned. Further, this faith makes the Saviour the object of devout contemplation. And further yet, working by love, it fastens the affections supremely upon the Saviour. Finally, this blessed object, thus loved and adored, reacts upon the heart with an elevating and purifying power. It is a law of human nature, that the character of man

conforms itself to that which gains his highest affections. He who loves money supremely, becomes sordid; he who loves pleasure, becomes sensual. He, whose heart is fixed on base objects, is gradually but inevitably debased; and his spirit gravitates towards their low mean level. But if his thoughts and affections be occupied with things pure and lovely, his whole being is lifted up into their clear sweet atmosphere. He is purified, too, by what attracts him. This principle has a thousand illustrations in the works of God. The insect takes its hue from the leaf on which it rests. The bird and the rose borrow their tints from the sunlight which bathes both plumage and flower. When God brings the winds out of his treasures, they are all pure and fresh alike. But how are these changed by what they gather up in every land and every sea. They blow from the north, giving snow like wool, and scattering the hoar frost like ashes. They return from the weary journey of Sahara, breathing forth, like a furnace, their scorching and suffocating heat. Laden with infection from inhospitable shores, or with fragrance from spicy groves, the pestilential or the aromatic gale visits the voyager when far out upon the sea. The great globe itself is lighted up and warmed by the orb around which it moves. If the light of the sun were quenched, the earth, chained to a dark and frozen centre, would wheel along its pathway in eternal night, and ice, and death.

No principles are better established than those which are involved in these illustrations. Now when you read in Scripture, the caution, "Love not the world, nor the things of the world," and when you read, again, that "The friendship of the world is enmity with God," do not think these to be arbitrary or unreasonable decrees. They are founded in the truest philosophy touching man, as well as

in the purest piety towards God. He that loves the world, becomes, by the very force of that affection, earthly and grovelling. He who bows his face into the dust, gathers defilement upon his brow. Nor does the command to love God rest upon other than the highest reason. Love to a being so holy and glorious, lays upon the soul the grasp of an upward attraction and of a transforming energy. He who communes with God, brings forth from the presence chamber a shining face.

These remarks unfold the principle contained in the text, that, through the faith which works by love, God purifies the heart. He who truly loves the Lord Jesus, opens his heart to influences which will discharge his corrupt affections, and assimilate him to Christ. This, indeed, is precisely the explanation which the Apostle gives of the matter. He speaks of Christ under the figure of a mirror, in which is reflected the whole glory of God. Then he adds these remarkable words: "We all beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." How impressive the statement! "*We beholding—are changed!*"

I have now mentioned five elements of saving faith. It rests on the testimony of God; its object is the Lord Jesus; its nature is vital and active; it works by love; it purifies the heart.

I will add two or three practical remarks, suggested by what has been now advanced, and close this discourse.

First. Our subject *indicates the difference between the religion of form, and the religion of a saving faith*. "Neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love." There is, here, a broad distinction taken between the rite of circumcision and true piety, and with this distinction is

associated the statement, that it is the faith, and not the form, that saves the soul. This principle has an instructive application to one of the most serious of modern errors in religion.

It is our persuasion, that baptism holds to Christianity the relation in which circumcision stood to Judaism. Now these two ordinances show their affinity to each other, in nothing more remarkable than in the circumstance, that the doctrine of baptism is now perverted precisely as was that of circumcision. In the age of Christ and the Apostles, it was the belief of many, that circumcision was, in some sense, a saving ordinance. It is now the conviction of many, that baptism is of saving efficacy. The baptismal regeneration of our time, may find its exact counterpart in the circumcisonal regeneration of the former time; and what we now have to meet is, identically, the same error, under another aspect, which Paul confuted. And we preserve absolutely, the sentiment of the Apostle when we tell you, that, as the ground of salvation, in Christ Jesus, neither baptism, nor the want of it, availeth any thing, but faith that worketh by love.

Your attention must have been arrested by the remark of Paul to the Corinthians, as bearing on this error. In his first Epistle to those brethren, he remonstrates with them in respect of the divisions which prevailed among them. These dissensions appear to have arisen, in some measure, from the partiality which the people severally entertained for those ministers and apostles who had baptized them. One was of Paul, another of Apollos, and another of Cephas. In the course of his remonstrance, the Apostle exclaims, "I thank God, that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say, that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized, also, the household of Stephanas; besides, I know not whether

I baptized any other." Now if baptism be a saving ordinance, or even if it be, in some mystical way, essential to a true regeneration, is it not exceedingly strange, that Paul should deliberately thank God that he had baptized, in the whole city of Corinth, two persons only, and the household of another? He then adds: "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." Upon the supposition, that baptism hath an inherent power to save the soul, how shall we understand the fact, that Christ sent him not to baptize? And how shall we explain the circumstance, that Jesus Christ baptized not at all, if so be that ordinance introduces sinners into the kingdom of God?

Nay, nay, brethren; baptism is not the renewal of the Holy Spirit. Water is the emblem of His cleansing power, but is not the hiding place of that power. Simon Magus was baptized by an Apostle, yet that Apostle afterwards perceived, that the sorcerer was still a sorcerer; "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Regeneration is something more than an outward washing. It is a baptism, not of water only, but of blood and of fire; nay, it is the work of the fire and the hammer; nay, more, it is the sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit; it is even a new creation, and a resurrection of the dead.

Secondly. *Our doctrine of justification by faith, supplies a powerful motive to holiness.* There are those, I know, who think otherwise. They pretend, indeed, that this doctrine leads to impiety and vice. If, say they, a man believe that he is to be saved by what he does, he will do his best; if works save, he will see well to it that his works are good, that his heart is pure, and his life holy. But if he believe that he is to be saved by his faith alone, he will conclude that good works are unnecessary; he will

rely on his faith, and be careless as to his life. This is the argument of the objector.

But the objection overlooks, wholly, the nature of the faith by which we are saved. It is a peculiar and powerful principle of goodness, implanted and sustained by the Holy Spirit. First, it worketh—it is a living, energetic principle. Secondly, it works by love; it is indissolubly associated with love to God and man. Thirdly, by it, God purifies the heart, discharging its corrupt propensities, and pervading it with the spirit of holiness. This is the nature of the faith by which we are justified. A living principle, working by love, bringing man's character into harmony with the Divine nature,—it vindicates itself against all the cavils of the disputer. The objection we have in hand was once well stated, thus: "If I believed that I am to be saved by my faith, and not by my works, I would take my fill of sin." The reply was admirable: "How much sin, think you, would it take to fill a Christian?" If the faith by which we are saved, be only another name for holiness, or, at the very least, if it involve, by absolute necessity, the possession of practical godliness where now is the force of the objection? It works by love to God, and, therefore, by hatred to sin; it works, also, by love to man, and, therefore, teaches the faithful to love their fellow men; it lifts up the soul into communion with God, and thereby, transforms the man after the image of God. Does such a grace lead to sin? Does justification, by such a faith, encourage disobedience to the law, and contempt for its author? Indeed, we may boldly say, that this faith is not more remarkable in saving the soul from hell, than in delivering it from sin. Nay, its transforming power is identical and co-extensive with its saving efficacy.

It were easy to show that this faith is the only true spring of all holy endeavors. It is the power of God unto

SERMON III.

THE CONVERSION OF YOUTH, THE HOPE OF THE WORLD.

BY REV. SAMUEL W. LYND, D.D.,

President of the Western Baptist Theological Institute.

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto, according to thy word.”—Psalm cxix. 9.

WE have fallen upon eventful times. We are rapidly approximating the golden age, more glorious than ever fable conceived. Our minds should not misgive us, on this point, for God hath spoken it. We grant that there is much darkness in the moral aspect of the world. The facility of communication which we possess, pours upon us daily, reports of wrong and outrage, which, in former times, would have been confined to a limited circle. But even if crime, in certain classes of the community, were actually on the increase, it might be expected. The powers of darkness rage, because they know that their time is short. This may be permitted, in order to give the kingdom of Christ a more glorious victory. Not more certainly is the sun steadily ascending to the horizon, while darkness envelopes the natural world, than is the sun of righteousness arising upon the moral world. Vainly should we strive to keep him back; vainly, as the proud monarch on the shore of ocean bade its swelling tide advance no further.

The human mind, in all places, is breaking off the shackles of ignorance and oppression. It is no longer the array of physical power, the swaying of the masses by authority. It is mind to mind, reason to reason. The battle field of the age is the soul of man, its weapons are moral; and can any doubt the result, who believe in the power of truth? Yet we anticipate no miracle. We look to the operation of active and rational instrumentality, and especially to the operation of moral influence upon the minds of the young. The rising generation constitutes the character of society. What that is, the world will be. David saw its importance, and hence the propriety of the language: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto, according to thy word." We have here presented to us an important inquiry, and a satisfactory reply. To these two points we invite the candid attention of the reader.

First. The important inquiry, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?"

This question, though applicable to a particular case, yet embraces the general question, *By what means shall the next generation be made better than the present?* Dr. Clarke observes, that "a *young* sinner has no *broad, beaten* path: he has his *private* ways of offence, his *secret pollutions*; and how shall he be cleansed from these? How can he be saved from what will destroy *mind, body, and soul?*"

Cleansing implies pollution, and pollution is inherent in human nature, in its present fallen condition. It exhibits itself at a very early period of life. Sinful curiosity is as natural to us as our desire for food. The restraints which are put upon us from early life, only give a keener edge to our inclinations. We incline to the instruction that causeth to err. We have more care for the body than for

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the soul. If it were not so, the exhortation would be needless, to seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness. We are prone to depart from God, and seek unlawful pleasures. We regard religion, or obedience to God, as a hinderance to our pleasures, and especially in the season of youth. To follow *good* example, in preference to *bad*, always requires effort and self-denial. Children, unrestrained, will run into vice. They need no teaching to be wicked: but to have them go in the way they should go, they must be trained to it by early discipline.

The character of youth is the character of mature age, and, consequently, the character of the young is the character of their generation. The history of the world fully proves the truth of this position. It commends itself to every man's observation. Those habits which are acquired in early life, generally run through the whole earthly existence of an individual. Habits of dissipation in youth, form dissipated and lawless men, unless reformed by the grace of God. Conversion often occurs in later years, but still the cases are comparatively so few, that they exert but a *general* and *indirect* influence upon the masses. We have a striking exhibition of this fact in the case of the Jewish people. When our Lord appeared among them, the nation had greatly degenerated in its moral and religious aspect. He came, and they received him not. The priests and rulers, confirmed in their character and their religious prejudices, met him at every point with unceasing hostility. Upon the people his heavenly instruction made but a transient impression. At one time, the excited multitude shouted, "Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:" at another, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him." Though many thousands acknowledged him after his

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ascension, yet the great body of them retained their views and habits. Under this influence, the rising generation filled up the measure of their iniquity, and fell under the curse of God.

The Christian religion is one of moral influence. It has to operate upon mind, heart, and conscience. Give it a fair field, and it will triumph over the world. In its whole history, such a field has never been granted. The mind, the heart, the conscience, have always been intrenched within barriers, which years of toil had erected. All the conquests of the gospel have been against such fearful odds; and yet, by the grace of God, it has often triumphed. There are no barriers so strong as an early perverted mind, a heart filled with the world, a conscience rendered callous to the voice of truth, and habits of rebellion against God. This difficulty must be met, in individual cases, and in the masses, by cleansing the ways of the young.

Youth is the season when are treasured up permanently all those *facts*, and *circumstances*, and *thoughts*, which, in after life, control the judgment, give direction to the passions, and form the moral character. Impressions are then more easily made, and the passions are strong to give permanency to the corruptions of nature, and to stamp error and vice, as indelibly upon the heart, as facts are indelibly impressed upon the memory. To this truth, the Sacred Scriptures bear ample testimony. The Lord, by the prophet Jeremiah, says: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye, also, do good, that are accustomed to do evil. Therefore, will I scatter them as the stubble that passeth away by the wind of the wilderness. This is thy lot, the portion of thy measures from me, saith the Lord, because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood."

The character of the young, is the character of the generation which they constitute; and by the moral and religious improvement of each successive race of youth, we are to realize the golden age of the world, foretold by inspired bards, when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. The character of the youth is, with few exceptions, the character of the man; and by the religious character of youth, we are authorized to expect a life of piety and salvation at its close.

Pollution is inherent in our nature. It exhibits itself as soon as moral action commences; and the lives of youth are stained with many sins—sins which seem to find their justification in the circumstance of youth itself. The Apostle Paul exhorts Timothy to flee youthful lusts, which would render his way offensive to God, and injurious to himself. Young men especially, are exposed to many temptations, and are exceedingly susceptible to their influence. The imagination and the passions are like combustible materials, dangerous in the vicinity of fire. Impatient of admonition, and destitute of that wisdom and experience which age usually brings with it, their thoughts and desires rarely extend beyond the present. Opposition to God and holy things, almost imperceptibly grow with their growth, and strengthen with their strength, until their habits become fixed, their associations confirmed, and their moral power prostrated. To establish a holy and useful character, the way of the young must be cleansed; their hearts must be renewed in the image of God; their principles of action must be such as will prove a firm foundation in the hour of trial; and their growing corruptions must be curbed. Few young people make the inquiry for themselves, how this is to be accomplished, and hence David makes it for them: “*Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?*”

II. The question is satisfactorily answered in the words, "*By taking heed thereto, according to thy word.*"

Two things are here stated : first, that youths adopt for their government, a right rule of action : and, secondly, that they take heed to this rule. No man can work well who does not work by rule. In the formation of character there must be some proposed standard of right and wrong, some settled principles upon which human conduct must be based. This standard or rule, is *the word of God*. This is of Divine origin, and is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." It contains the principles upon which the Divine government is administered, in reference to rebellious subjects, and the laws by which they are to be governed. In this standard there is power to cleanse the way of the young. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth.

Independently of this standard, society cannot be reformed. The experiment has been made upon a large scale, for nearly six thousand years ; and wherever the people have been deprived of it, idolatry, superstition, and moral darkness have prevailed. Witness the condition of the entire heathen world. Literature, science, the arts, and civilization have, indeed, existed, as in ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome ; but *moral darkness* brooded over all this fair scene. Each successive generation improved upon the vices of the former, until all, at length, sunk under the weight of crime. And what are they now ? But while the heathen were destitute of the Bible, they had a religion, *idolatrous*, it is true, but still a religion ; and for a long time it tended to sustain *national existence*, and to *aid the influence of the law*. There was an acknowledgement of higher powers interested in the affairs

of men; but there is no instance of the existence of organized society, without such acknowledgement. France tried the experiment. By her leading men, the Bible was proscribed, the Sabbath blotted out, and the existence of Deity denied. Who does not know the result? Who does not know, that men became incarnate demons, and destroyed each other as wild beasts of the forests? With a false standard of religion, community can never be purified; and with no religion, organized society cannot long exist. Without the Divine word for a moral standard, society cannot be reformed, and sinners cannot be saved. The word of God, therefore, must be adopted, as the *true moral standard*. This is the first step. This is the basis of holy character. God's word must be the rule of our faith, and our practice.

But the reply in the text embraces another idea, and that is, that we must bring our heart and life to the test of this rule, or, in other words, must take heed to our way, according to this rule. It is obvious, therefore, that the rule must be *understood*, and, in order to be understood, must be *studied*. We mean that the Bible itself must be studied. Many persons fix upon the views and practices of a particular denomination, as they may be swayed by education and association; and having settled in their minds that this denomination is right, they go to the Scriptures through life, to prove that their views and practices are right. We do not proceed thus in ascertaining what is taught in the Constitution of the United States. We study the document itself, to know what its principles are: and if any difficulty arises, and we can ascertain what construction the authors of the instrument put upon it, or, what practice they founded upon it, we cheerfully avail ourselves of their aid. Beyond this, all is mere opinion, to which we assign no authority. This is the way to

understand the Bible. *Go to the book itself.* The meaning of the book, is the meaning of its words, according to the laws of language. Here we exercise our reason, because this is its legitimate province. If any doctrine presents a difficulty, inquire how the writers of the New Testament understood it, when, in their letters, they made it the subject of discussion against false views. To understand the Bible we must *study* it.

But more than study is embraced in the direction to take heed to our way, according to the word of God. It must be investigated with *prayer*. The Bible is exceedingly plain to a mind under the influence of right affections, in all that pertain to salvation. The gospel is hid to them that are lost, because of their *pride*. The Jewish rulers were so blinded by pride, prejudice, and hostility to Christ, that they could not comprehend his plainest parables. But, with prayer to God, the *youngest*, and the *most illiterate*, may be trained in the way to heaven.

When an understanding of the Divine standard is thus secured, it must be obeyed. The word of God is the great spiritual regulator, and we must bring our way to it, and set it right. It is the chart by which we are to be guided through the ocean of life, and we must take heed to it. The ruin of young persons is caused *by choosing false rules of action, or by having no rules at all.* Let the word of God be your standard, and you are safe. Seek God as your oracle with your whole heart, that you may not wander from rectitude. Do as David did. He says, "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee."

But we must be more explicit. To take heed to our way, according to the word of God, is, to regulate, by his word, *the way of our salvation, and the way of our life.*

The administration of the Divine government is *remedial*. All men are condemned by the law of God, which they have violated; but the sentence is not immediately executed, because it is stayed for the purpose of showing mercy to the guilty. God gave his only begotten Son to die for sinners. He is the mediator between God and man. In consequence of his atonement, Jehovah can be just, and yet the justifier of him that believes in Jesus. He has exalted his Son to the throne, given him power, as mediator, over all things, and committed all judgment to his hands. The Divine administration is changed, from that of mere law to a *remedial*, for the violation of the law. And now, Jesus Christ, in his mediatorial capacity, proposes salvation to men, on the ground of his own merits, through the exercise of faith. The government of Jehovah, considered in itself, is a government of *mere law*; that of Jesus Christ is a government of *grace*. Under one of these two, all men must be ranged, and abide the issue. If they claim the favor of God on the ground of their obedience to the law, they must be utterly and for ever ruined; for this law requires perfect obedience in every moment of existence. If they claim his favor purely for Christ's sake, they will enjoy it, and be saved; for this substitutes the *law of faith*, in place of the *law of obedience*—*the righteousness which God has provided through faith*, in place of *the righteousness of man by obedience*; on the ground of what Christ has accomplished as our mediator. So the word of God teaches, and our salvation must be regulated by it. We must be justified before God, according to his word; or justified by faith in Christ, without deeds of law. We must, like the apostle Paul, be found in Christ, not having on our own righteousness, but the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus Christ. Until we receive the Son of God as our Saviour by faith, and

through him be restored to the favor of God, we reject the only Divine government instituted among fallen men, and render ourselves for ever incapable of any moral act, which can be regarded by our Maker as an act of obedience.

We must take heed, also, to our way of *sanctification*, according to the word of God. This is by the influence of the Spirit of God, renewing our nature in righteousness and true holiness, and perfecting in us the image of God, during our residence on earth. In a word, to take heed to our way of salvation, is to understand and embrace the doctrines of the gospel. It is a mistake, that a man may hold any views, provided his conduct be right. His views must accord with the Scriptures, or his life can never be conformed to the will of God. Not to embrace the teaching of God's word, and submit to it, is rebellion against the government of Divine mercy.

But while the administration of Jesus Christ is remedial, it has its laws for the government of all his subjects. And hence, it is required that we love God supremely; love the Saviour with all our hearts; love his followers, because they bear his image; consecrate ourselves to his service; deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; and live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world. This is true conversion. And if we would cleanse our way; if we would be saved from sin and pollution in this world, and be happy in the world to come, we must take heed to our ways, according to the word of God. And this must be done in the season of youth, or there can be but little hope for the future. We do not limit the power of God, but the fact is fearfully arrayed before all eyes, that but few, comparatively, are brought to the knowledge of salvation, after their habits in rebellion have become confirmed by years. The same is true of the question, in

a more general sense. By what means shall the next generation be made better than the present? The answer is, *By the religious training, and the conversion of the youth.*

Here is our principal hope for the ultimate renovation of the world, as foretold in the sacred Scriptures. Nor is it a vain hope. The attention of Christians has, for many years past, turned upon the young. A religious literature has been created for their benefit. Sabbath schools have multiplied, not only in our cities and villages, but in sparse settlements, throughout our land; and God has sanctioned these efforts, by the conversion of vast numbers of young people. Where there were ten young men training for the ministry, thirty years ago, there are now a hundred. These instrumentalities are increasing every year; and every year is hastening on the glorious jubilee of our world. The millennial morning dawns, for the young are cleansing their ways, by taking heed thereto, according to God's word.

We desire the salvation of *all*. We would invite and welcome to Christ, the weary aged, whose limbs are trembling at the threshold of the gloomy vault. For the little evil they may yet be able to avert, the little good which they may yet be able to do, but especially for their own sakes, would we invite them to the fold of Christ: but we desire the *young* to enlist, *because they are young.*

The largest amount of the ordinary life of man, which it may be yours to enjoy, is now nearly all before you. We wish to see *that time* consecrated to the service of the Saviour. You are vigorous. We want *that vigor* in the most holy cause in which men can embark. You are now capable of being trained in the armies of the faithful. We want your *trained services* in many future conflicts.

Think what you are capable of *becoming*, and of *doing*. Think of the years of holy triumph and usefulness, that, in all probability, await you, if you are now consecrated to the service of the Redeemer. Think of the gracious reward of a life spent in the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. Many of us, more advanced in life, must soon pass away. You will then be the righteous, or the wicked age. Your course will characterize the generation that succeeds you. Carry the thought of your influence, for good or evil, down through successive generations; bring it all congregated before the bar of judgment. Oh! what a scene of anguish will spread itself out before you, if your influence has held back millions from the path of life. But what holy joy will fill your hearts, if you see millions, directly or indirectly, brought to the right hand of Christ, through your instrumentality. What must have been the feelings of Job, when he could say, "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish, came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." But how far short must even these feelings fall, when compared with those who witness, in the day of judgment, the influence of a life consecrated from youth to the service of the Saviour? We entreat you, *by your youth*, to enlist under the banners of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the critical period of your life. You are adopting your principles of action. Let them be such as are found in the Word of God. You are now forming your society. Let it be the society of the *well-informed*, the *refined*, the *virtuous*, and, above all, the *religious*. You are forming the habits of future life. Let *holiness* and *usefulness*

characterize them. You are preparing a morality, not merely for the *world*, but for the scrutiny of a judgment bar, before him who searches the heart, and where every one will receive according to his true character in the sight of God. You are preparing for *eternity*, an eternity of unmingled woe or blessedness. Prepare for it, by taking heed to your way, according to the Word of God. God says to you, "My son, give me thy heart." Do it without delay, for now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. God loves them that love him, and they that seek him early shall find him.

SERMON IV.

THE NATURE OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

BY REV. F. G. BLACK.

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"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."—Daniel ii. 44.

LET us, for a little season, contemplate this dream, and the interpretation thereof. Nebuchadnezzar saw the image of a man standing before him; it was as the image of a living man, the appearance thereof was to him both terrible and formidable. But that which was the most remarkable in its appearance, was the different metals of which it was composed. The head of gold; the breast and arms of silver; the belly and sides, or thighs, of brass; the legs of iron; and the feet part of iron and part of clay. This was a wonderful representation of the different monarchies of this world.

But let us see the interpretation thereof. This dream represented the different kingdoms of this world, which should successively bear rule amongst the nations, and have influence upon the character and history of the Jewish Church. The four monarchies were not represented by four distinct statues, but by one image, for the reason that they were all of the same spirit, and all, more or less,

opposed to the Church of God. It was the same power, only it was possessed by different nations.

The head of gold signified the Chaldean monarchy, of which this man was himself the king.

The breast and arms signified the monarchy of the Medes and Persians. This kingdom was formed by Darius, the Mede, and Cyrus, the Persian, in alliance; and hence, it is represented by two arms meeting in the breast.

The belly and thighs of brass signified the Grecian monarchy, founded by Alexander, who conquered the last of the Persian emperors, Darius Codomannus.

The legs and feet of iron signified the Roman monarchy. Some suppose that this signified the latter part of the Grecian monarchy, the two empires of Syria and Egypt; the former governed by the family of the Seleucidæ, and the latter by that of Lagidæ. Thus, they make these two families the two legs and feet of this great image. But my opinion, in common with many others, is, that the Roman monarchy is here signified; for it was in the time of that monarchy, and that, too, when it was in its glory, that the kingdom of Christ was set up by the preaching of the gospel. "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger,

because there was no room for them in the inn." Luke ii. 1—7.

The fullness of the time was now come, when God would send forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law. It was foretold that the great Redeemer should be born in Bethlehem. In the passage quoted, we have a history of the fulfilment of the predictions concerning the time, place, and manner, of the birth of this illustrious personage.

He was born at the time when the fourth monarchy was in its full strength and glory ; when it had become, more than either of the former ones, a universal monarchy. He was born in the days of Augustus Cæsar, when the Roman empire extended itself further than ever before, or since, including Parthia one way, and Britain another ; so that, in the passage quoted, it was called "the whole world." At this time, there was scarcely any part of the civilized world, but what was, in some way, dependent upon it. Now, according to Daniel's prophecy, this was to be the time of the Messiah's birth. "In the days of these kings," the kings of the fourth monarchy, "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed."

About sixty years before this, Jerusalem was taken by Pompey, the Roman General, and, in its state policy, became tributary to the Roman empire, as is manifest by this taxing ; for, when all the Roman empire was taxed, the Jews were taxed amongst the rest. This shows their connection with, and dependence upon, that empire.

There is another circumstance, as to the time of the Messiah's birth, signified in this general enrollment of the subjects of the empire, which should be mentioned. There was, at this time, universal peace in the empire ; it was, hence, meet, that He, who is the Prince of Peace, should be born, under whose divine reign swords should

be beaten into ploughshares, and the nations should learn war no more.

Upon the place and manner of his birth, I will not stop to remark, as neither of these enters so immediately into my present purpose.

According to the prophecy of Daniel, in the days of the kings of the fourth monarchy, the God of heaven was to set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed. This kingdom was typified by the Jewish Theocracy, and declared to be at hand by John the Baptist, and by Christ and his apostles in the days of his flesh. But it did not come with power, until Jesus arose from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of God. Then, amidst myriads of attendant and adoring angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, he was solemnly inaugurated, and publicly proclaimed King universal, especially of the New Testament Church. Thus were fulfilled the words of Jehovah, by his servant David, "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion."

This is that spiritual, evangelical, and eternal kingdom, to which Christ referred when interrogated before Pontius Pilate, and in reference to which he said, "My kingdom is not of this world." His empire, indeed, extends to every creature; for all authority is committed into his hands, both in heaven and on earth, and he is head over all things to the Church: but his kingdom primarily imports the Gospel Church, which is the subject of his laws, the seat of his government, and the object of his care. He is likewise said to rule in the midst of his enemies, by reason of the opposing powers to his gracious administration.

This kingdom is not of a worldly nature, or origin, nor has it this world for its object. It can neither be promoted nor defended by worldly power, influence, or carnal

weapons, but by bearing testimony to the truth, or the preaching of the gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Its establishment amongst men is progressive; being destined, ultimately, to fill the whole earth. Its real subjects are only those who are of the truth, and hear and obey the voice of Christ; for none can enter it, but such as are born from above; nor can any be visible subjects of it, but such as appear to be regenerated, and maintain a creditable profession of faith and obedience. Its privileges and immunities are all spiritual and heavenly. Over this glorious kingdom death has no power; it extends as well to the future as the present world; and though entered here by renewing grace, it is inherited in its perfection in the world of glory. This is the kingdom which the God of heaven was to set up, in the days of the kings of the fourth monarchy, and which, in the days of Christ and his apostles, he did set up, to bless all the nations of the earth.

The Founder of our holy Christianity chose to make his advent among the lowly and despised. This was agreeable to the spirit of that holy religion which he came to establish. There was a time, when a multitude of his followers, astonished and convinced by the omnipotence displayed in his miracles, were disposed to take him by force, and make him king; but so far from favoring their design, the historian tells us, he departed again into a mountain himself alone. And in reply to the Roman Governor, he uttered those memorable words, "My kingdom is not of this world." His whole conduct, from the manger to the cross, and from the cross to the mount of ascension, was in strict accordance with this characteristic maxim of genuine Christianity.

In selecting those whom he would send forth as the apostles of his doctrines, he went, not to the palaces of the great, but to the humble walks of life, and chose from amongst the poor of this world, those who, in prosecuting their mission, were destined, like their divine Master, to be despised and rejected of men. In performing the work which their Lord had assigned them, the lowly but zealous fishermen of Galilee, and the courageous tent-maker of Tarsus, with their faithful fellow-laborers, despising every worldly honor, were content to lay their laurels at the feet of Christ, and ascribe their success to the efficacy of the cross; and thus, they counted all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord, for whom they willingly suffered the loss of all things.

In the early establishment of Christ's kingdom, his religion was embellished with simplicity—a simplicity which is peculiar to a religion coming from such a divine source. Its simplicity, beauty, and power, consisted in its simple institutions and ordinances, its inward and moral purification and embellishment of the soul, and the divine power accompanying its institutions, ordinances, and purifications. Its simple and divine tendency was to call the affections from earth, and fix them upon heaven; and, by a steady radiance of divine glory, to conform the soul to the image of God, its great original. But, at a very early period, this simple institution began to be corrupted, by intermingling the traditions of men, and teaching them, for the commandments of God. But a few centuries after the establishment of this spiritual kingdom, we find the professed successor of Peter, the fisherman, dwelling in a magnificent palace, attended by troops of soldiers, ready to avenge the slightest insult offered to his dignity; surrounded by all the ensigns of worldly greatness, with

more than regal splendor, proudly claiming to be the sovereign ruler of the universal Church, vicegerent of God upon earth, whose decision is infallible, and whose will is law. The contrast between these two pictures of primitive Christianity in the first century, and Papal in the seventh or eighth, is so amazing, that we are irresistibly led to inquire, Are they the same? If the one is a faithful picture of Christianity, can it be possible that the other is worthy the name?

We cannot suppose that this transformation obtained at once. This change, from the lowliness of the one, to the lordliness of the other, required ages for its completion, and it was not till the lapse of more than five centuries from the death of the last Apostle, that it was fully effected. It commenced in the days of the apostles, and with it the mystery of iniquity commenced its wild persecutions. Had it not been for these purifying influences of the fire of persecution, kindled by the emperors of Pagan Rome, the advance of ecclesiastical corruption and spiritual despotism, would, without doubt, have been much more rapid than it was, and at a much earlier period the man of sin had been revealed—even that son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or worshipped, and showing himself that he is God. For three centuries after the ascension of Christ, his disciples were exposed, with few and brief intermissions, to a succession of cruel and bitter persecutions and sufferings. The pampered wild beasts, kept for the amusement of the Roman populace, fattened upon the bodies of the martyrs of Jesus, in the amphitheatres of Rome, or, of other cities of the empire; and hundreds of fires were fed by the living frames of those who loved not their lives to the death. “They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins,

being destitute, afflicted, tormented, (of whom the world was not worthy;) they wandered in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." Under such a state of things, there was, of course, but little inducement to the worldly minded and ambitious to seek admission to the Church; and if, during a season of relaxation, some such might creep into its pale, it required only the mandate of some other emperor to kindle anew the fires of persecution, to separate the dross from the gold. This opposition of the powers of earth constituted the most effectual barriers against the speedier progress of corruption in the Church, and, according to the prediction of Paul, before the man of sin was revealed, it was necessary, that this let or hinderance should be removed. One can scarcely doubt, that the Apostle had reference to the persecution of pagan Rome, when he said, "And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time, for the mystery of iniquity doth already work, only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way; and then shall that wicked be revealed."

No one who reads the New Testament Scriptures, and understands the character of Popery, and then compares them, can doubt that Popery is a subject of prophecy. To prove this statement, I shall cite the full length portrait given by the Apostle: "Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he

who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish: because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."—2 Thess. ii. 3—12.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God, and prayer."—1 Tim. iv. 1—5.

It is obvious, that the wicked power which in the former of these passages is the subject of the Apostle's discourse, and denominated the Man^{of} Sin, had not then been fully displayed, and that there existed some obvious obstacle to a complete revelation of the mystery of iniquity. It can scarcely be doubted that the Apostle's hinderance of which he speaks, referred to persecuting pagan Rome, which acted as a restraint upon the pride and domination of the clergy, through whom the man of sin ultimately arrived at his power and authority. In this language of the Apostle, there is, to say the least, a remote prophecy of the termination of the Roman empire.

Many of the errors, during several of the passing centuries, the fruit of vain philosophy, paved the way for the events which followed; but the hinderance was not effectually removed until the time of Constantine, who, professing himself a Christian, undertook to convert the kingdom of Christ into a kingdom of this world, by exalting the teachers of Christianity to the same state of affluence in the empire, as had been enjoyed by pagan priests and secular officers in the State. The professed ministers of Christ, having a wide field now open to them for gratifying their lust for power, wealth, and dignity, the connection between the Christian faith and the cross was at an end. What followed this state of things was, the kingdom of the clergy supplanted the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Many things, however, in the Christian profession, before the reign of Constantine, made way for the kingdom of the clergy, and slowly, but insidiously, was the purity, simplicity, and glory of the Church wrested from her; so neither, after the clergy were raised to stations of temporal dignity and power did they at one stride arrive at the climax here depicted by unerring pencil of inspiration. Neither the corruption nor the Reformation of Christianity, was effected in a day or a year. "Evil men and seducers waxed worse and worse." When the Bishops were once exalted to wealth, power, and authority, learning, eloquence, and influence were exerted to maintain their own personal dominion and popularity, and this exaltation was the prolific source of every corrupt fruit to the Church; and thus being shorn of the purity and simplicity of her institutions, she was like Samson when shorn of his locks. In all the transactions of the Church, human for Divine authority was substituted; and, instead of the simplicity of self denial, bearing the cross, love to the brethren, and all the train of heavenly graces taught by

Jesus Christ and the primitive Church, they substituted pomp, worldly dignity, and power, and contended for human authority. This change tended to darken the human mind as to the real nature of revealed Christianity. Compare this state of things with the language of Christ, when he said, "My kingdom is not of this world." This, is a maxim of unspeakable importance in the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of vast consequence to every true hearted Christian. By departing in some sort from this essential element of Christ's kingdom, almost every corruption which has ever found way into the Church, has been introduced, and thus this heavenly institution has been debased. In all the efforts of Christians to spread the knowledge of the cross, they should keep their eye upon this fundamental principle: "My kingdom is not of this world." It will not be expected, that I can, in one discourse, set forth all the attendant circumstances which led to the utter subversion of the original designs of Christ's kingdom. But I may be permitted merely to allude to some of them. And,

First. Its unholy alliance with the state under Constantine, in the year 312, from which time the progress of priestly domination was far more rapid than in any other age. This opened the way for designing and ambitious men to seek and obtain connection with the Church.

Secondly. The law enacted, in the year 372, by the Emperor Valentinian, which favored extremely the rise and ambition of the bishops of Rome, by empowering them to examine and judge other bishops, together with other circumstances growing out of this law, was another step towards papal supremacy.

Thirdly. The custom which obtained somewhat extensively before the close of the fourth century, of

referring to the decisions of the bishops of Rome, on account of their claim to apostolical descent, all questions of apostolical doctrines and customs, was another step towards the rapidly increasing tendency of papal domination.

Fourthly. The regard almost universally paid to the bishops of Rome, by the fierce and barbarous tribes of Goths, who poured in from the North, and conquered and ravaged Italy, and the capital of the ancient empire, in the years 408, 409, and 410, together with the following circumstances, contributed in no small degree to the power and influence of the bishops of Rome. In the year 452 Attila, king of the Huns, invaded the North of Italy, laid waste some of its provinces, and was only prevented from marching to Rome, and renewing the horrid cruelties of Alaric, by an immense ransom, and the powerful influence of the Roman Pontiff, Leo the Great. In the year 454, Rome was again taken and pillaged by Genseric, king of the Vandals. And in the year 476, the western empire was finally subverted, and Italy, with its renowned and time honored capital, reduced under the dominion of the Gothic barbarians, by the conquests of Odoacer, king of the Heruli, a tribe of Goths, and the deposition and banishment of Augustulus the last of the western emperors. These barbarous tribes, when converted to Christianity, looked upon the ministers of Christ as invested with the same rights and privileges which distinguished the priests of their fictitious deities. Nor, is it to be wondered at, that these superstitious barbarians, accustomed as they were to regard with a feeling almost amounting to adoration the high priest of their own heathen gods, should manifest a readiness to transfer that veneration to the high priest of Rome, especially, when they saw the multitude of heathen rites which were already introduced into Christian worship,

and the willingness of the Roman Pontiffs, by still further increasing the number of these pagan ceremonies, to accommodate their religion to the prejudices and inclinations of all. Thus, by the corruption of the clergy, and the ignorance and superstition of the masses, was the way marked out for the former, to claim supremacy over the latter, by a Divine right, which, was the subversion of the kingdom of Christ, and the establishment of the kingdom of the clergy. Yet, Christ then did, does now, and ever will claim, that his kingdom is not of this world. His, as I have before said, is a spiritual, evangelical, and eternal kingdom. Such a kingdom as the latter, was the God of heaven to set up in the days of the kings of the fourth monarchy; and such he did set up; but, through the ambition, treachery, corruption, and superstition of men, the designs of this kingdom have been subverted, and, instead of exhibiting the native simplicity of the Gospel institutions, it has been overspread with the dazzling rites of human invention and superstition.

As we have before seen, the corruptions of the Church commenced at a very early period, and progressed slowly through succeeding centuries, until the clergy were rife with an unhallowed thirst for power. Every circumstance conspired to foster the growing ambition. In the year 605, Boniface III. succeeded to the Roman See, and in 606, applied to Phocas, who then held the throne, to confer upon him the title of universal bishop, with the privilege of transmitting it to his successors, which the Emperor accordingly did in the same year. In doing this, the Emperor declared the Church of Rome to be head over all other Churches. The divine rite, therefore, claimed by the Pope, instead of coming from God, came from Phocas; and instead of the Popes of Rome being the successors of Peter, they are the successors of Boniface III.

who lived in the beginning of the seventh century. This state of things being established, Paul's prediction was accomplished, the man of sin revealed, and that corrupt system of Christianity and spiritual tyranny, which is properly called Popery, was fully developed. This, we contend, is the kingdom of the clergy, and is opposed to the kingdom of Christ. Comparing the state of things existing, from the fourth century up to the time when Phocas declared Boniface universal bishop, with the simplicity of gospel institutions in the days of Christ, and during the first century, when the gospel was propagated by the apostles and their immediate successors, we are constrained to ask, Are these the same? If the one is a faithful picture of the spiritual, evangelical, and eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ, has the other any claim to it?

I shall now proceed to speak more particularly of the nature and design of Christ's kingdom. The stone cut out of the mountain without hands, represents the kingdom of Jesus Christ; and this kingdom was to be set up, in the days of the kings of the fourth monarchy, by the God of heaven, and should hence be a spiritual one, established by divine authority. This kingdom, as you discover, was neither to be established nor supported by human policy; but by such means as the God of heaven should appoint. To this effect Jesus said to his apostles, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." "And we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

First. The gospel Church is a kingdom, of which Christ is universal king. Over this kingdom he rules by his word and Spirit, unto which he gives law and protection, and from which he receives homage and tribute. Christ

said of this kingdom, "It is not of this world." It is the kingdom of God amongst men. This kingdom is from above, and its tendency is thither.

Secondly. Christ was born, when, by the decree of the Emperor of Rome, all the world was taxed. This is a plain indication, that the Roman empire had become as universal as any which had ever obtained amongst men, and goes far to show that the time had now fully come, for the incarnation of the Son of God, and the setting up of this glorious kingdom. The God of heaven is now about to do his own work, and fulfil his own counsels, in setting up a kingdom whose dominion and glory is to fill the whole world, and whose benign influence is to bless all the families of the earth.

Thirdly. The kingdom of Christ knows no decay. There is no danger of its destruction, as it is a spiritual, evangelical, and an eternal kingdom. It does not admit of either revolutions or successions. It shall never be destroyed by the invasions of a foreign foe, neither can fire or sword waste it. The combined powers of earth and hell cannot wrest the Prince of his subjects, nor the subjects of their Prince; for the gates of hell shall not prevail against it—it is founded upon a rock. The promise is, "The kingdom shall not be left to other people." It is true, this kingdom was taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles; but still Christianity ruled the Messiah's kingdom. The Christian Church is hence the same, and will continue so, world without end.

Fourthly. Christ's kingdom shall be victorious. It shall break in pieces and consume all others, shall outlive them, and flourish with undiminished splendor, when all others shall have faded, and been crushed with their own massive corruptions. Every kingdom which appears against the kingdom of Christ, shall be broken with a rod

of iron, as a potter's vessel. In the kingdoms which submit to the spiritual, evangelical, and eternal kingdom of Christ, tyranny, idolatry, and every thing which is now their disgrace, shall, by the power of the gospel, be thoroughly broken up, and their embellishment shall be the inward embellishment of the spiritual, evangelical, and saving graces of the Holy Spirit. The day is coming, when Jesus Christ shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and shall have made his enemies his footstool. Then shall we see this, and many similar prophecies, in all the majesty of fulfilment. To the final triumphs of this kingdom, Christ seems to refer, when he says, "On whomsoever this stone shall fall, it shall grind him to powder."

Fifthly. It shall be an everlasting kingdom. Though the foundation of the earth be removed; and though the beauty of the heavens be defaced; and though all things else be changed: yet, the throne of the Son of God is for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of his kingdom, and of the days of the years of his kingdom there shall be no end. It is the divine nature of Jesus Christ which gives stability and immutability to his throne and dominion. "But, unto the Son, he saith, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." "Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." The kingdoms of earth which had broken in pieces those around them, have in their turn been demolished. This is true of the Chaldean, Medeopersian, Grecian, and Roman. But the kingdom of Christ, while it breaks in pieces all others, shall stand itself, invincible and eternal. The throne of Christ is as the days of heaven, and his seed as the stars of heaven, which shall shine for ever and ever. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever, even thy

God, O Zion. The kingdoms of this world must and shall range themselves under the ample folds of the blood bespangled banner of Prince Messiah, while, in the majesty of Godhead, he shall move onward the unconquered, and the unconquerable King of kings, and Lord of lords. When, therefore, the inhabitants of earth, heaven, and hell, shall assemble over nature's funeral, Christ shall reign in all his undiminished glory, the universal, the eternal King.

- We have now seen something of the nature of Christ's kingdom. Its design is to prepare the inhabitants of this world for a future bliss. This it does by an inward purifying of the soul, called the new birth, a new creature, and regeneration, with many other names by which the same thing is set forth. None shall ever obtain this blissful state of immortality, but such as are sanctified by the truth; hence the Saviour prays, "Sanctify them through thy word, thy word is truth." In the days of Christ and his apostles, and during a few of the first centuries, Christ's kingdom presented such a state of things; but, after the unholy attempt to make his a kingdom of this world, as we have before seen, designing and corrupt men sought and obtained connection with the Church, and soon the fine gold became dim, and the body of the Church lost her inward embellishment; pride, ambition, and a thirst for power swelled her soul, until, with the weight of her own massive corruptions, she exploded in the sixteenth century, and the kingdom of Jesus Christ came forth, and once more was the world blessed with the privilege of looking upon the kingdom of Christ in all its native simplicity and spirituality, which, with its goings forth, was to bless all the families of the earth. The light which Luther, as God's servant, had kindled, daily brightened, until it shone with unclouded lustre through many of the

most powerful nations of Europe. The friends of the kingdom of Jesus Christ seized upon every means which the progress of society had placed within their power; they studied, argued, preached, wrote, translated, printed, and distributed truth in every direction, accompanying all such with the spirit of devout prayer to the King immortal, invisible, and eternal. Thus the kingdom of God came forth, disburdened of the massive corruptions which had so long obscured her glory.

Now, we ask, by what means shall this kingdom be propagated and defended?

First. By men possessing largely the spirit of Christ; men whom God sends into the world to gather to the fold of Christ; men whose hearts glow with love to Christ, and love for souls; men who will sacrifice themselves upon the altar of Christ and his kingdom; men who will place their lives in the hands of Christ, and their time, talents, and all they have and are at his command; men who, when he says, Go, will leave all and go, taking with them the promise of God only, "I am with you alway;" men who will not secularize themselves for the sake of gain, to the neglect of souls and the cause of Christ; men with pure hearts, clean hands, and clear heads. By bearing testimony to the truth, the preaching of the everlasting gospel of Christ, this kingdom, which the God of heaven set up, is to be spread through all the earth, until the knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the world. In this great work, there is ample scope for the most gigantic intellect; its doctrines are the doctrines of God, time, and eternity; these are the doctrines which are to redeem the world from ignorance, superstition, and sin, to a pure knowledge, morality, and religion, with which God himself shall be well pleased, and which shall restore the world to holiness, peace, and happiness; then shall the kingdoms

of this world be the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the principles of his spiritual, evangelical, and eternal kingdom over which he reigns, be universally diffused. This is all to be done by spreading truth broad cast over the world. In our day, when the progress of society affords so many facilities for spreading the gospel, the friends of the Redeemer's kingdom should embrace every opportunity to send the truth with electric speed to the ends of the earth.

Secondly. The Church, too, must drink largely of the same spirit, which is a spirit of enlarged benevolence. This is the principle which led the Son of God to come down from heaven, to labor, to suffer, to bleed, and die for the glory of God, and the salvation of sinners. The Church, we say, must possess the same spirit. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." A religion that suffers selfishness to reign supremely, is not of God; but is a branch of Anti-Christ. When the Church of Christ is under the influence of the proper spirit, whatever is necessary to advance the interests of Christ's kingdom can be had. Is it men? they can be had. Is it money? it can be had. The Church is, no doubt, greatly at fault upon this subject. She does not possess enough of the Spirit of Christ, as is evident from the fact, that when the Church needs money to sustain any of her benevolent enterprises, she must be stirred up to the work by some thrilling appeal to her sympathies. This shows that she is not as full of the Spirit of Christ, as she should be. Each member of the Church should consecrate a part of his property to the service of God, if he would see the kingdom of Christ spread with power and great glory.

When the Church embodies in her ministry and membership the true principles of the kingdom of Christ;

when clad in her "beautiful garments," she comes forth clear as the sun, fair as the moon, then indeed, will she be *terrible*, as an *army in banners*, and her goings forth shall be as the morning.

In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these other kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

This, then, is the kingdom which shall swallow up all others, and itself stand for ever. And notwithstanding these ten kings shall oppose the Son of God in his grand designs; yet, he shall overcome them all by the word of his power, and they, too, shall range themselves under the ample folds of his banner, as it waves in triumph over the nations of the earth. The motto inscribed upon it is, "THE WORLD REDEEMED BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST!" Then shall it be true, that the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of Christ, and one universal shout shall proclaim, "Babylon the great is fallen, IS FALLEN." Then Jerusalem shall be rebuilt, and shall be holy. The Jews shall be gathered out of all countries, whithersoever they have been scattered, and dwell in a peaceful habitation; and all nations shall assemble to see the king in his majesty and glory. Nation shall no longer lift up sword against nation; but,

"Peace on earth will hold her easy sway
And man forget his brother man to slay."

Who that looks abroad upon the world, and surveys the number of brilliant discoveries, lately pressed into the service of the Church, can doubt that he is standing in the very twilight of that glorious day. Bible, missionary, and tract societies, are sending their holy issues to the top of every high mountain, and over the face of every alluvial

plain, literally covering the earth with the glory of God as the waters cover the channels of the great deep. The whole world begins at last to feel the impulse. The isles of the sea are responding, like faithful echo, to the deep thunders of the continent, while nation after nation catches the flying theme, and rolls the rapturous "hosannah round."

Utter discomfiture, sooner or later, will "break in pieces and consume the kingdoms of the earth." The crowned heads of Europe have watched the enlargement of Immanuel's kingdom, and trembled with fearful forebodings. Nor are their apprehensions unfounded. An unseen hand is feeling for the pillars of their thrones, and soon a voice will be heard proclaiming through heaven, earth, and hell, Jerusalem triumphs, Messiah reigns, his dominion is an everlasting dominion! "Praise ye the Lord!" Amen.

SERMON V.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

BY REV. H. H. KAVANAUGH,

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"God is love."—1 John iv. 16.

THE Apostle John, who is usually styled the beloved disciple, was so filled and fired by the divine principle of love, that his whole character was sweetly softened and sublimated by its natural effects. In this way he was a partaker of the divine nature, and sustained the most honorable and gratifying fellowship with his Maker; as in his own language he has expressed it, "God is love: and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." And hence his exhortation to his brethren in his affectionate style: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." Elevated by this experience and this knowledge, we are prepared to suppose that this Apostle would be very contemplative of the divine character; and seize upon the most lovely and encouraging feature in it, and by the authority of inspiration reveal it to the world. Is it, then, marvellous, that John should be spoken of as "the disciple whom Jesus loved?"

But to claim your attention more immediately to the text in hand, that "*God is love*," we would remark, that

objections may arise in the minds of many, based on the abounding *natural* and *moral* EVIL in our world; such as "the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noonday;" the famines, earthquakes, volcanoes; the desolating tornadoes that "sweep the trembling land," and peril the lives and substance of those whose commercial enterprise leads them to dare the dangers of the deep, and to contend with the climates, rocks, sands, and billows of the ocean: and such moral evils as hatred, variance, slander, robbery, murder, injustice, outrage, and wrong, that are so extensively practiced among men.

We shall attempt to sustain the declaration of our text:—

I. By meeting and obviating these objections.

First. The first objection we shall notice is, How is it, that God, who is represented in his word to be too *wise* to err, or to be deceived; too *good* to design any thing contrary to the happiness of his people; and too powerful to fail in the accomplishment of his designs, should permit the introduction of evil in his dominions?

Two kinds of evil—the moral and the natural, exist in our world. Moral evil is sin—the transgression of God's law; and natural evil is the punishment of sin, in such afflictions as God has entailed upon our race. Fallen men and angels are the authors of moral evil; and God is the author of natural evil, which is the punishment of the moral.

But the main question we have to meet, is, how this misfortune of sin and misery came into the world?

The Scriptural account of it is the only rational explanation given to the world. The Bible informs us of two orders of intelligences that were endowed with free moral agency; and placed under the restraining principles

of a wholesome morality, defined and enforced by the moral LAW of God. They had the power, as their agency implied, of obeying the requisitions of the law given them, or of violating its requirements. If they had not this power, they were not agents at all. It is indispensable to the existence of a free agent, that he have power to do wrong—that he have power to resist even the stronger motive; and, by the force of *will*, to be considerate and prudent, or to be reckless and sinful. It is true, this power is qualified, in some degree, by a conviction of what is right, and by the force of conscience; these, however, can only check, but cannot absolutely control, the will. It is the existence of this agency, that constitutes the propriety of placing God's rational creatures in a probationary relation to himself. And it is during this state of trial, that the loyalty or disloyalty of the subjects of moral government is tested by obedience to the law, or by a violation of its requirements.

The angels showed themselves to be such moral agents as are here contemplated. They had the power to stand or to fall. How long they stood, we know not; but the presumption is, for a great while. The leading spirit in the fall, must have had time to acquire eminence and influence, before he could draw the third part of the stars of heaven after him. He fell, and thereby discovered his power to do so. Other angels kept their first estate, and thereby showed what the fallen might have done.

Such, too, were the agencies of Adam and Eve; and their history sustains the power ascribed to them. They stood and fell; and thereby settled the question, as to their power to do the one or the other.

The explanation, then, as to the introduction of evil into the dominions of Almighty God, is to be found simply in the ABUSE OF THE POWERS of these *secondary agents*, in

transgressing the law of God. Against this abuse of power, God did all that he could have done, without destroying the agency of the intelligent beings whom he created in his own likeness and image. He had legislated upon the deepest feelings of our nature—the *love* of LIFE and HAPPINESS—the *fear* of DEATH and CURSING. These motives were as strong as the constitution of human nature could bear; and yet there was strength enough in the agency of these creatures, to break these mighty barriers, sin against a gracious heaven, break up the harmony of a well-balanced universe, and thus originate the moral evil that has polluted our nature, disgraced our world, provoked the maledictions of God's violated law, and "brought death into the world and all our woe."

It is thus the Scriptures enable us to account for the origin of the evils that curse our race, and our world; and to vindicate the character of the God of love.

Secondly. It may be objected again, If these evils result from the abuse of free moral agency, why did God make such moral agents?

This question may lead us to points of consideration too deep for us to fathom; but while we concede this, we think that there is enough which we do know, or may know, approximating such a solution of the subject, as to reconcile us to what God has done in this matter.

Not to create an intellectual race, or races, would be to do away the necessity and propriety of any species of creation whatever. The power to *contemplate, know, love, and enjoy* God and his creation, by some portion of his creatures, is what gives meaning, and worth, to all that God has made. Our Maker and his works are intended as the sublime source of the entertainment and happiness of his thinking creatures. Take away the intellectual

creatures of God, and where is the necessity of the suns that in such glorious magnificence wheel in the centre of the wide-spread radiance which they emit; while the darkness and the light are both alike to God? And why the planets, which, in their huge bulk, are speeding on their way in such immense rapidity, under the control of the powers that balance them so exactly in the orbits in which they move? Is it to be presumed, that God would make them merely for his own entertainment? At least, does not the addition of a thinking race give a finish, a meaning, and a glory to the whole, which nothing else can give?

Is there anything for which we more ardently sigh than for immortality? Is there a hope that we cherish, more glorious than the hope of eternal life? In the view, then, of all that God has made us, and of all *for* which he has made us, let us take the universe for the field of our observation—the inheritance of our spiritual being, and eternity as the leisure hour of an interminable exploration; and thank God, that even amid the dangers incident to a probationary life, he has given us our existence.

But let us appeal to our consciousness as to whether we approve the act of God in our creation. What is it we love more than life? Who wants to travel back into nonentity? Then, by all our love of life, and the happiness provided for us, I vindicate the act of God in our creation.

Since it has pleased God, in his wisdom, to give us intellectual faculties, capable of understanding our relations and our obligations, the fitness of things requires that we should be placed under law to God; and not that we should be governed by the power of God, as though we were not in possession of the elements to make us properly the subjects of a moral government. In the judgment of

our heavenly Father, we have the capacity to exercise the functions pertaining to moral agents; he therefore considers us in this character, and treats us accordingly. Hence, he gives us his law as a rule of life; enforces it by appropriate penalties; and ensures the happiness of those who keep his commandments: and, under the gospel, provides for the transgressor of his law—for the forgiveness of our sins, upon our penitence, prayers, and faith in the merits of his Son, and in the promises of his grace.

Thirdly. If the first parents of our race revolted against the government of God, before they had propagated their species, why did not God send them to their merited destiny; and create another pair, that a more fortunate destiny might ensue to the human family?

In answer to this question, we would say, in the *first* place, that it presumes that God would, or could, do better on a second trial, than he did at the first; but the infinite wisdom of God does not allow us so to suppose. He is too perfect in his wisdom to amend the first conception of his mind. He never attains to perfection by progressive improvements on past experiments. What he makes is at first good—very good.

In the *second* place, we would remark, that Adam and Eve were made free moral agents; and, if our heavenly Father would have a moral government at all, it is indispensable that he should have moral agents; and if he have moral agents, they must have power to do *wrong*, as well as *right*. Anything short of this, would not be free moral agency. This power, therefore, is essential to the very *existence* of such an agent. A second Adam and Eve must then have the powers of the first, and be as liable to the abuse of them, as their predecessors. What, then, could be gained by a second creation of this kind?

Again, in the *third* place, it appears to us to have been more suitable, that the gracious provisions of the gospel should have been made for the fallen Adam and his children, so as to cover the case of every one that might, by transgression, become a sinner. The remedial scheme of salvation by grace, having been introduced at this time, provides for the entire progeny of our federative head; the moral condition of all of them being the same. The expedient that would provide for the salvation of one, would, in the nature of the case, make that of another as possible. And such we would expect of Him who is no respecter of persons.

Under the provisions of grace, the condition of the progeny of the fallen pair, in one respect, at least, is better than that of Adam, in his primeval state. By one transgression, he was doomed to death, without any provision of pardon or mercy. But if we sin, "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" and though sinners, through him we may be saved.

Fourthly. If God is love, why did he not act upon the right of his sovereignty, remit the penalty of his violated law, and save the rebel without the sacrifice of his Son?

One of the most glorious traits of character that belongs to the Divine Being, is his HOLINESS. And what is holiness, but a full and uniform conformity of conduct to principles of moral rectitude? God is not above those principles; but is so strictly subject to them, by the force of his holiness, that he cannot violate them. The Apostle Paul asserts, it "Is impossible for God to lie;" and, by a parity of reasoning, we may add, he cannot violate any of the moral attributes of his nature. It is his undeviating adherence to these principles of moral rectitude, that constitutes his IMMUTABILITY, and

establishes his claims to the confidence and adoration of his intelligent creatures—the subjects of his moral government. Abraham asked the angels whom it was his honor to entertain, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”—Gen. xviii. 25. A prophet says, “The ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them.” Hosea xiv. 9. Jeremiah says, “The Lord is righteous.” Lam. i. 18. “The Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth.”—Dan. ix. 14. While the Psalmist declares that “clouds and darkness are round about him,” he adds, that “**RIGHTEOUSNESS and JUDGMENT** are the habitation of his throne.”—Ps. xcvi. 2. “Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.”—Rev. xv. 3. But we will not further abuse your good sense, by quoting Scripture evidence to prove that God is a *holy* and *righteous* being. We presume you entertain no other sentiment. Our object is, to show that God repels any ascription of sovereignty to him, that infringes the principles of rectitude; and which makes him as unprincipled as arbitrary. When God can swerve from those principles that give stability and glory to his government, he will shake the confidence of the universe of his intelligent creatures, and cease to be the object of their *trust* and *reliance*. Because God is too righteous and holy to do this, he sacrifices his Son to bear the penalty of the law we had violated—meet the demands of justice—uphold the principles of a righteous government; and, by a voluntary dying “the just for the unjust,” to remove all legal barriers out of the way of forgiveness; so that God can be *just*, and the justifier of every one that believeth in Jesus Christ. The atonement made by our Saviour answers these ends; and justifies the goodness and mercy of God to man. On this subject we might enlarge, but our limits will not allow.

II. We shall, under the second general head, attend to the direct evidence that God is love.

The Scriptures have emphatically declared, that "God is Love." They have said, also, that "God is Light, and in him is no darkness at all." He is light, then, to the exclusion of all darkness: and so we understand our text—He is love, to the exclusion of the principle of *malevolence*.

The text under consideration, gives a pre-eminence to the attribute of LOVE in the Divine character. We have felt a resentment to the thought of ascribing any presiding superiority of one attribute over another, in the perfections of God. We have been fond to conceive of the Divine Being, as harmoniously balanced in the full round of all his attributes. We do not now give up the idea of the harmony of all his attributes, in all the will and purposes of God. But, bowing to the authority of that revelation that comes from the unerring fountain, one sentence of which so often dispels the long continued gloom of error, and leaves the truth in its own proportions, well defined, and in bold relief, before the grateful mind of the humble inquirer after the truth as it is in Jesus—bowing, we say, to this authority, we must concede the truth so emphatically revealed, that the principle of LOVE has such a sway and dominion over the nature of the Divine Being, as to modify and soften the operation of all that characterizes him, "who is over all, God blessed for ever more."

What was it but LOVE in the bosom of the Eternal One, that prompted the idea of giving *creation* birth; and of presenting it in all its engaging variety, from the minute to the magnificent; from the unorganized, and lifeless, to the exquisitely beautiful organizations found in the ever-varying kinds, that characterize the vegetable kingdom

in its more than fifty thousand species, with which the earth is enriched and adorned ?

What was it but the same great principle, that called the animal kingdom into being ; graded it from the lowest link that touches upon the upper one of the vegetable, to the highest state of animal organization ; perfected the instincts of some of the tribes, so as to pervade, in a measure, the borders of the neighboring territories of intellect ; and crowned the whole by making and moulding man after the likeness and image of God—the glorious author of the universe ?

Thus made, man was intended, in the infinite love of God, to be his child and heir ; and, as such, to be the happy recipient of the good of earth and heaven. His Maker gave him dominion over all that the air, sea, and earth contained ; and, beside this, had prepared for him a kingdom from the foundation of the world, which will yet be awarded to all the pious and the good.

But the great event which gave occasion for an unexampled development of the love of God, was the **FALL OF MAN**. This was an event, if we may so speak, that aroused the moral powers of the Deity to an extent that baffled angelic comprehension, excited their wonder, and discovered to them that unfathomed depth of divine love, in which “all their thoughts were drowned.”

God, as the *Creator*, could not but feel that his rights were outraged. As lawgiver and governor, that his authority was insulted. As the Father of our spirits, he was grieved at the condition of his children. As the God of justice, he must vindicate the rectitude and authority of his law. As the God of holiness, he must maintain those principles of his nature and government, which constitute his holiness. As the God of truth, he must inflict the punishment due to

transgressors. As the God of goodness, he must desire all possible measures that could safely relieve the condemned and miserable culprits, who had sinned so grievously against him. As a God of love—of the intense love of an infinite being, he would be willing to measure a sacrifice, (if it could avail to the relief of his creatures—his children,) commensurate with the infinite depth of his commiseration and mercy. He, therefore, exerts his infinite wisdom for a plan that will meet all the demands of his holy, righteous, and gracious nature; uphold the authority of his law; and adequately sustain all the great ends of his government.

The wisdom of God made this discovery! But it was a plan that could only be accomplished by a sacrifice, the possibility of which no created mind could entertain. It was at no less a sacrifice than the incarnation, humiliation, nay, the very sufferings and death of one of the Divine persons in the Godhead. It was discovered, if the Word—the Son of God, for instance, would assume human nature—be born of a woman—be made under the law—take the form of a servant—and though without sin himself, become a sacrifice for the sins of the world; that, if the Father would lay upon him the iniquity of us all, and if he would voluntarily bear the punishment due to our offences, justice would be satisfied with the sacrifice; the law would be sustained in its authority; the ends of government would be met; the displeasure of God against sin would be manifested; and his love to his intelligent and immortal creatures would be most impressively and sublimely disclosed. By this means, the holiness of God would be maintained; his truth sustained; and his goodness and mercy richly illustrated. And, by this personage, “the Lord strong and mighty,” the powers of darkness would be overcome; death demolished; and immortality and

eternal life brought to light, by his resurrection from the dead, in which he would lead captivity captive, and purchase gifts for men.

This was the plan so perfect, gracious, and kind, conceived by the wisdom of God. We may suppose the plan to be suggested as a possible one, by which all the ends enumerated might be accomplished, and immortal sinners be saved and blessed with eternal life and glory.

The celestial host might be enraptured at this consummate display of wisdom, and feel adoring fire burn through their devoted spirits, at the infinitude of Divine perfections, thus illustrated to their view. But, that fallen spirits, rife with enmity to God, and impatient at the restraints of his holy law, should be redeemed by such an august, divine, and unspeakable sacrifice as the Son of God, was a thought too deep for finite minds. Angelic faith could not but stagger at the thought. What! sacrifice him who is the fountain of all life—the maker of all things in heaven and in earth! Sacrifice him who is the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his person! who is in the form of God, and deems it no robbery to be equal with God, who is over all God blessed for ever more! It was a thought too bold for angelic minds to ponder. The awe struck spirits of the blest, secretly wishing pardon for glancing at the thought, would conclude its impossibility. Retiring from the adventurous thought, we fancy they are reasoning thus: "That God is good, that he is love, we have always known; creation, in its endless adaptation of means to good and kind designs, most amply proves. Our own full bosoms of eternal bliss are adoring witnesses. Heaven's beauty, glory, life, and joy, are monuments eternal of God's goodness and love. But sin can provoke his ire; as once on these heavenly

plains, rebellion, high and daring, conducted by Lucifer, and the mighty spirits seduced by him, who refused submission to the equal laws of heaven, and assailed the thrones and monarchy of God;

‘Them the Almighty hurled headlong
Flaming from the ethereal skies,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition; there to dwell
In adamantine chains, and penal fire,
Who dare the Omnipotent to arms.’

To man in paradise, God had given a law; which offered for obedience, its rewards, and threatened for disobedience its penalties. The veracity of God is pledged, his holiness is involved; and from these principles the Immutable cannot turn. Man must be lost! The doom of fallen angels is the precedent; the righteousness of the law, and the veracity of God are the security for this fatal issue. But one way remains to save him, conceived by infinite wisdom, but at too high a price. He is lost!”

While the angelic host are thus contemplating the catastrophe that has doomed man to death and misery, and fail to find the ground on which to hope in his behalf, the mind and heart of God are pouring thought and feeling in the infinite sweeps of the Divine capacity, until the love, mercy, and sympathy of God, becomes so intense, that he “spares not his own Son, but delivers him up freely for us all;” “God so loves the world, that he gives his only begotten Son, that whosoever shall believe in him, will not perish but have everlasting life.”

Love was the great principle in the divine nature, that prompted inquiry into the possibility of redemption. This leading principle put into requisition all the perfections of Deity, to achieve the godlike design; and his love, ever

ready to match the vast conceptions of his mind, offered all that his justice demanded, and made a new disclosure of himself to heaven and earth. That he was good, every intelligent creature knew; but in his love, never before revealed, was a breadth, length, depth, and height, that passeth understanding. Were not the angels astounded in amazement, at God's disclosure of his purpose? Was not *this* the time, when there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour; when mute astonishment reigned over the seraphs, whose wings hung unconsciously by their sides, while thoughts ineffable played upon their spirits? The theme was all-absorbing. It was news the most glorious that had ever pervaded the supernal courts. The grand central point of interest, where angel minds were pleased to pause and ponder, was the throne of God. From the hidden recesses of God's infinitude, a new disclosure was made. Goodness and mercy—so rich, so rare, so new, so exceeding all that had come before it—now rolled in godlike magnificence upon the thoughts and feelings of the lofty, loyal, loving spirits of the angels that had kept their first estate; that they knew it come from depths too profound for the most extended line of angelic reason to fathom. It was then that those mighty sentiments were felt and sung, to which, in after days, the shepherds listened at the birth of the Saviour, "Glory to God in the highest! on earth, peace; and good will to men!" It was thus

"In heaven the rapturous song began,
And sweet seraphic fire
Through all the shining legions ran,
And strung and tuned the lyre.

Swift through the vast expanse it flew,
And loud the echo rolled;
The theme, the song, the joy was new,
'Twas more than heaven could hold.

Down through the portals of the sky,
The impetuous torrent ran;
And angels flew with eager joy,
To bear the news to man."

This great provision of grace was but to clear the way for an ample display of God's goodness and mercy, which were to follow us all the days of our life; to bring upon us a tide of heavenly good; to overflow the whole field of our wants; to quench every thirst of our spirits; to pardon our guilt; wash away our pollution; help our infirmities; inspire us with peace and joy; give us a victory over our enemies; raise us from the dead; and crown us with eternal life in heaven! Such are the benefits flowing to us through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

We see this master feeling of love, ever displaying itself in the long suffering and forbearance of God; in the gracious terms of pardon; in the strivings of the Spirit; and in that fatherly and ever active providence, that works with such manifest and deep solicitude for the well-being and salvation of us all.

We can trace the same great principle in the Lord our God, even in the doom that awaits the finally impenitent. It is but a wise and wholesome measure of government—*First*, To show the great evil of sin, and to warn the intelligent universe of its dreadful consequences. *Secondly*, To separate the vicious disturbers of the quietude and happiness of the good and loyal subjects of our great sovereign. It is an essential element to a consummate state of bliss, that we should not have the presence of those who would offend the feelings of holiness by crime, injure our reputation by falsehood, rob us of our property by theft, or assail our persons in enmity. The Apostle John, in his description of the heavenly Jerusalem, says, "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth,

neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life."

And, now, my hearers, since you are blessed with such engaging and heart subduing revelations of God—such revelations, as heaven and earth had not known before, may your contemplation of it be such as is expressed in the language of Dr. Watts,

"Our thoughts are lost in reverent awe;
We love and we adore;
The first archangel never saw
So much of God before."

This revelation has set new fire to the devotions of heaven, and kindled into rapture the adoration of earth. Rebels against God and goodness! Can you persist in your opposition against *such* a father and God? Will not the love that moved heaven and hell to amazement, and gave eternity its richest theme of song, subdue your rebellion?

"O let his love your heart constrain,
Nor suffer him to die in vain!"

And now, my dear friends, would you avail yourselves of the unequalled fulness of grace and blessedness, bequeathed to you in the infinite love of God? Would you rise to the highest dignity of your nature? Would you attend to the highest interest of your being, an interest that rises as high as heaven, as glorious as the presence of God, as rich as eternal life, with boundless and undying joy? Would you be God's children, and heirs, and inherit all things; and in the opulence of a universe, feel the fortune of immortality provided for you by him who is said to be LOVE? Then seek this universe of good in the kingdom of God, which has the promise of the addition of ALL things. And may this all-sufficient, and only sufficient, inheritance, be the fortune of our every immortal spirit, is my prayer for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

SERMON VI.

CONFIDENCE IN GOD EXPLAINED.

BY REV. R. C. GRUNDY, D.D.

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“Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.”—1 Peter v. 7.

IN the verse preceding the text, the Apostle exhorts the Christian to humble himself under the *mighty hand of God*, that he may in due time be exalted. By the mighty hand of God is here meant, his sore judgments and afflictive providences. When God sorely afflicts us, he lays, so to speak, his hand upon us; and to be humble and resigned under his disciplinary hand, is our highest wisdom. Profound humility and submission are the way of God's appointment to exaltation and glory; and, to this end, afflictions in the economy of grace, have been ordained for the Christian. Subdued and humbled by sore affliction, the Christian is in the proper state of mind to feel his weakness and his need of God, and to cast all his care upon him. This he is encouraged to do, from the precious assurance that the Lord careth for him. “Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.” We are here taught, *first*, that the Lord cares for us; and *secondly*, the duty consequent—that we cast all our care upon him. These are the two great points of the text—a fact, and a consequent duty.

I. *The Lord careth for us.* This important fact is asserted in the text, as an all-sufficient reason why

we should, at all times, and under all circumstances, cast all our care upon the Lord. "For he careth for you."

How precious the thought, how encouraging and full of blessing the fact. Various and numerous are the ways in which the Lord indicates his care for us. Some of these we will now notice, by way of illustrating the general statement of the text.

First. The Lord has manifested his care for us in the work of the external creation. The heavens have been spread over us by the creative power of God, for the special purpose of furnishing us a reflection of the Divine glory. In the language of inspiration, the heavens declare to us the glory of God. This is the great end for which they were made. They are a reflector, which God himself has made for our special benefit; in the light of which we may form some faint conceptions of the glory of the great Creator. But, in addition to furnishing us a reflection of his glory, God created the heavens to exhibit to us his benevolence. Without the light, and the genial warmth of the sun, the earth would be a dreary and barren waste. And without the light of the moon and stars, in the absence of the sun, we should be subjected to much inconvenience, and deprived of much of the comfort we now enjoy. We not only, therefore, behold in the heavens the reflected glory of God, but we see his goodness to us displayed, in ordaining, for our special comfort, the sun, moon, and stars, to give us light by day and by night. Thus did God care for us, when he fitted up, at the beginning, the stupendous fabric of the external creation for our habitation.

Second. We have the evidence of God's care for us in the susceptibilities of our nature, and the provision which God has made for our wants.

Had God no care for us, he could have easily created us with no susceptibilities but those of pain. He could have made the eye to behold nothing but misery; the ear to hear nothing but discord; to the taste he could have made every thing bitter; to the smell every thing offensive; and to the touch every thing painful. But, instead of this, he has adorned the creation around, about, and beneath us, with a beauty upon which we can gaze and never tire. Every breeze is freighted with music and fragrance, and all nature, in a word, proclaims, that her great Creator careth for us. But these remarks contemplate man, only, as a high order of the animal creation. As intellectual and moral beings, we are endowed with susceptibilities and capacities for happiness like God himself. God has given us a mind capable of infinite development, and endowed us with a corresponding thirst for knowledge. He has given us a moral sense, by which we enjoy pleasure in doing right, and suffer pain in doing wrong; and, in accordance with these susceptibilities, he has ordained the retributions of eternity, by which we are rewarded with the joys of heaven, or the agonies of hell, according to our conduct. Thus has God cared for us in the constitution of our nature, and the provision which he has made for all our wants.

Third. God has cared for us in his providence.

From the earliest dawn of our being, he has watched over us with the tender care of a parent, and blessed us with the hand of a benefactor. In the language of an inspired writer, it is in God we live, move, and have our being. It is by his power, and his will, that we live every moment. Nothing could depend more absolutely upon God, than does our life in this world. The metes and bounds of our earthly pilgrimage he has fixed, and all our footsteps are ordered by him. We cannot live a moment

longer, nor die a moment sooner, than accords with the purpose and pleasure of God. "God hath made of one blood," says an inspired writer, "all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hath *determined* the times before appointed, and the *bounds* of their habitation." By another inspired writer we are told, that God careth for the sparrow, and that we are, in his estimation, of *more* value than many sparrows. We are also assured, that such is the care that God has for us, that even the very hairs of our head are all numbered. In a word, God governs this world with a special eye to our good, and so as to make all things, in the end, result in blessing to the Christian. "All things," we are told, "work together for good to them that love God."

Even our afflictions, by the Divine appointment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. For this end, God has constituted his Son head over all things to, or for, the Church, so that every thing is made to work for its ultimate triumph, and the good of every Christian. Such is, in brief, the doctrine of God's providence over the world. It is, from beginning to end, a gracious and practical display of the fact, that he careth for us. He controls all circumstances, governs all events, and overrules even the wickedness of the wicked for our good. *He careth for us.*

Fourthly. The care of God for us, is shown in the gift of his Son for our redemption.

All that is necessary to be said on this point, is the simple fact, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." Again, says an inspired writer, "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet, peradventure, for a good man, some would even dare to die; but God commendeth his love toward us, in

that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Could we, in every other respect, doubt whether God cared for us, here is evidence which excludes all doubt. "God *commendeth* his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners," &c. God not only cares for us, but he loves us. "He so loved" us. Who can doubt the sincerity and love of that friend who will sacrifice his property, and even life itself, for our good? But God *commendeth* his love toward us, in that while we were *yet sinners*, Christ died for us. When we had nothing in or about us to commend us to God, but were his enemies, and the just objects of his wrath, *then* it was that, from the promptings of the love of his heart, he gave his Son, the greatest object in the gift of his boundless love, a sacrifice for us!

Fifthly. God's care for us is seen in the fact, that every Christian is constituted his child by adoption, and made a joint heir with his Son Jesus Christ.

It is a distinguishing feature of the gospel, that all redeemed by the blood of Christ are made, by adoption, the sons of God. The whole Church, redeemed by the blood of Christ, is God's adopted family, of which Jesus Christ himself is the elder brother. By virtue of the adoption of the gospel, the Christian stands related to God differently from any other created being. He is, by gospel adoption, "a joint heir" with the Lord Jesus Christ. He stands thus peculiarly related to, and invested with, the glory of the divine nature. His relation to the divine throne is peculiar, from the fact, that he is a *joint heir* with Christ; and he is peculiarly identified with the divine nature, from the fact, that Christ is his elder brother. He is, in these respects, above the angels themselves, in dignity and glory. Never did Christ assume the nature of angels, and exalt and glorify it as his

own, but ours he did. In consequence of our adoption, we are permitted to call God our Father, and to share his paternal affection. In consequence of this, we are permitted to approach him, not as the objects of his wrath, or the subjects of servile fear, but as the children of his love, with the assurance, to encourage us, that he is more ready to enrich and bless us with the Holy Spirit, than even are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. Such, in brief, are some of the proofs that God careth for us :—

1. He has shown his care for us in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath.

2. He has manifested it, in giving us a nature endowed with great susceptibilities for happiness, and in making corresponding provision for our wants.

3. He has shown his care for us, in the protection and blessings of his providence.

4. He has manifested the same, in the gift of his Son to redeem us. And

5. He has shown it, in that he has adopted us as his children, and made us joint heirs with his Son Jesus Christ.

We come, now, to consider the duty growing out of the fact, that God careth for us. “*Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.*” In consequence of the fact, that God cares for us, it is our privilege and duty to cast all our care upon him. This is the doctrine of the text, and the duty which it enjoins. This is the specific duty growing out of the important and interesting fact, that God careth for us. It has been well remarked, that it is not a providential and prudential care, but an anxious and vexatious care that the Scripture forbids. Having used the means, and exercised due care, in subserviency to the providence of God, we are not to be over-solicitous

as to the issue. Having, to the extent of our ability, used the means, in accordance with the divine plan, and with a due regard to the providence of God, we are to confide in the divine wisdom and the divine goodness as to the result. And this we are to do, with a determination to be satisfied with the result, whatever it may be, knowing that God does all for the best. This is what we understand to be implied in casting all our care upon God. In the position here defined, we exclude alike the doctrine of fatalism, or disregard of means upon the one hand, and all superstition upon the other. The doctrine inculcated, is nothing more nor less than an intelligent looking to God, *in the use of means*, for special results, and a consequent acquiescence in his will as to the issue, whatever it may be. It is a willingness to take our place at God's feet, as the instrument and agent, praying that his will, and not ours, be done. Such a position, you perceive at once, relieves the mind of all undue solicitude, and gives calmness and quietude, and presence of mind, in times of sore calamity and of greatest danger. And here observe, that such a position is not that of the fatalist. It is far from it. The fatalist casts off all responsibility to act in the use of means, and, with a blind submission to his fate, consoles himself with the thought, that whatever is to be, will be, regardless of any agency of his. Such an one, in the occupancy of such a position, casts not all his care upon God, but upon a mistaken and perverted view of God's purpose and plan. Not so the man who has an intelligent and Scriptural view of the use of means, as ordained of God for the accomplishment of his purposes. True it is, that, in common with the fatalist, he believes in the doctrine of the divine purposes and decrees as all eternal, definite, and fixed. But he differs wholly from the fatalist, in making the means for the accomplishment of a given end, a

necessary part of the divine decree. The fatalist divorces the means from the end, and rejects them as any part of the divine decree, and thus makes God a tyrant, and man a machine ! The true believer regards the two as divinely joined together, and holds, as an essential item of faith, *that God has decreed the means with the end*. And it is worthy of remark, that he who holds that God has decreed the means with the end, can never be, in practice, a fatalist, or make man a machine in the great matters of faith and salvation. And this, allow me to say, is the cardinal and distinguishing point in that view of Christian faith called Calvinistic. It is, simply, that means, in all matters pertaining to Christian duty and human salvation, are an inseparable and necessary part of the divine decree, and are to be used as such. For instance, God has decreed faith as necessary to salvation ; but he has also decreed, as means to obtain it, the preaching and the hearing of his word. The word and the agency of the living teacher, are the medium and the agency of divine appointment, and must be regarded and used as the means divinely appointed, and inseparably connected with the decree of God to save the believer. And it is only in the relation which the preached gospel sustains as means to an end, in the divine purpose and plan, that we have any encouragement whatever to preach the gospel for man's salvation and the world's conversion. God has all wisdom to adapt means to ends, and all power to clothe them with efficiency. The means, therefore, of God's appointment for the accomplishment of a given end, are but the mediums of his wisdom and power, pledged for the accomplishment of that end. The relation, therefore, which the means, as a part of the divine decree, sustain to the end, carries with it a pledge of the fact, that God will clothe them with all necessary power to effect the end decreed. And here is

the true doctrine of the efficacy of means, and the encouragement to use them. It lies in the divinely appointed relation between the means and the end, in the divine decree. God appoints the means for the accomplishment of his own purposes, and clothes them, for this end, with all necessary power. In and of themselves, means have no power to effect the great ends of faith and salvation. Their full power to accomplish the great end contemplated, lies in the fact, that they are ordained of God for the specific purpose. The simple fact, that the means of the gospel are ordained of God for man's salvation, carries upon its face the pledge of the exertion of all necessary divine power, to make them efficacious to the end ordained. Hence, Paul exclaims, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; *for it is the power of God unto salvation.*" Here was Paul's encouragement to preach the gospel amid the greatest danger, and in the face of death. It was the single fact, that, being God's means for the great end of man's salvation, it was God's power. The relation of the means to the decreed end, in the divine purpose, clothed, as such, the gospel, in the Apostle's estimation, with ample power to secure the great result; so that, on this account, he gloried in the gospel, and was ready, with all boldness, to proclaim it upon the heights of Roman glory, and in the face of Roman philosophy! Such is the position of every Christian, in regard to the decrees of God and the use of means. Instead of sitting inactive with the fatalist, and consoling himself, "that what is to be, will be," he regards the means as a necessary part of the decree; and, in the use of the means, to the extent of his ability, he casts all his care upon God, in regard to the accomplishment of the end. Instead of *torturing* and *distorting* the divine purpose and decree of God to save sinners, and ultimately to

convert the world, with the false creed and assurance of the fatalist, *that if we are to be saved, we shall be saved, do what we will; and if we are to be damned, we shall be damned, do what we can*: the true minister and disciple of Christ regards the gospel as God's means for the accomplishment of the great end; and hence he labors every where, even unto death, to make it known to the ends of the earth. "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also—for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." The glorious efficacy of the gospel, therefore, for the salvation of the sinner and the salvation of the world, lies in the relation which it sustains, as the divinely decreed means, to the divinely decreed end. The means are decreed with the end; and hence the Christian's encouragement to labor even *to the death* for the world's conversion.

It is true, that God has purposed and decreed to convert the world to himself, and hence the glorious result is as certain and fixed as is his throne. But it is equally true, that God has decreed to do this through an agency, and in the use of the means of his own appointment; and hence the Christian, instead of doing nothing, and saying, "*Whatever is to be, will be,*" labors and prays, *Thy kingdom come!* and having done his duty in the use of means, he casts all his care upon God as to the results. And, although all may be dark and desolate—although iniquity may abound and triumph, and religion be scouted, here is the end decreed, with the means for its accomplishment; and, in the faithful use of these means, the Christian can cast all his care upon God as to results. Here is our encouragement, both to preach and pray. God cares for the Christian, and never forgets the Church. Nor has any man a right to cast his

care upon God, and expect his blessing, until he has first used the means, and acted in accordance with the Divine command. This is as true, in all the common and practical matters of life, as it is in religion. No man has a right to cast his care upon God, and expect the blessing of his daily bread, and the support of his family, until he has first used the appropriate means, and duly regarded the Divine arrangement, that in the sweat of our face we shall eat our bread. It is true, God has power to rain down bread from heaven, and to feed us by miracle, but such is not his purpose, or plan; and, consequently, he who casts his care upon God to do this, and neglects the means, as the condition and medium of the blessing, must perish. But having used the means, with a due regard to God's purpose, in ploughing the ground and sowing the seed, we are then authorized, to cast all our care upon him as to the result, and expect with confidence, the blessing. And here let me remark, that whenever we go beyond our province, as agents in the hands of God, using the means of his own purpose and plan, for a given blessing, we become solicitous for nought. For instance, when we have done all in our power, in cultivating the soil, and planting the seed, what does it avail us to be over anxious, as to whether God will send the early and the latter rain? Our undue solicitude will not bring the cloud, or cause the rain, and is all for nought. Having done our duty, in the use of the means, we may now cast all our care upon God, and rest perfectly easy as to the result. And so in all our afflictions; solicitude or care, beyond the use of the means, is all of no avail, and should not be indulged. Here, for instance, is a mother, at the bedside of a sick and dying child. With all the fidelity of maternal affection, she is carefully engaged in using every appliance and remedy to save the life of her child, and restore it to health. Her care and solicitude is, that

every remedy in the scope of human power and skill, may be used to save life and restore to health her child; but, beyond this, she has no care. Having used the means to the extent of her ability, she can confidently commit her care to God, and, casting all her care upon him, can expect the blessing, and await with resignation the result. Now, what avails any solicitude, beyond the use of the means? Will it give the medicine any more efficacy, or cause life to be spared, with any more certainty? Why should we be over solicitous, beyond the careful use of the means? We cannot, thereby, cause the object of our solicitude to live a moment longer, and we only torture, unnecessarily, and to no effect, our own minds. Our duty lies in the faithful use of the means, and, consequent upon this, is our privilege and duty to look to God for the blessing, and to acquiesce in the result. Such is the position of the Christian man. Here is the true recipe for the troubled spirit, and the true secret of a contented mind. Such a casting of all our care upon God, in the use of means, ensures presence of mind and fortitude, in time of greatest danger and darkest perplexity. See it illustrated in the case of Paul, when suffering shipwreck, and threatened with death. In the darkness of the tempest, when all hope had forsaken the crew, and they were in the act of deserting the ship as lost, Paul arose, and exhorted them to remain in the vessel, in order that they might be saved from destruction. God had assured him that he must go to Rome, and, in this assurance, he was certain of the result; but, so far was he from pleading this as a reason why they should give up the ship and do nothing, that it furnished him all the encouragement he had to labor for the result of a safe arrival at port. So is the Christian, in regard to the ship of Zion. As it sails over the great ocean of time, it is subject to many storms, and is often threatened to be

engulphed in the violence and darkness of the tempest; but, with the assurance of God, who can still the waves and calm the tempest—that she shall ultimately reach the destined port, freighted with a world redeemed, the Christian, in the light and faith of such assurance, never abandons the ship, but, casting all his care upon God, labors against wind and tide, confident that, in the end, he shall reach the port of his heavenly rest, and enjoy the promise of his reward.

May God teach us the *true* philosophy of casting all our care upon Him. And to his name be all the praise. *Amen*

SERMON VII.

DEATH A BLESSED EVENT TO THE CHRISTIAN.

BY REV. SIDNEY DYER,

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"And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
—Revelation xiv. 13.

Who does not remember the unutterable and thrilling sensation which rushed, like an overwhelming flood, over the soul, when the mind first fully comprehended the import of that Divine law: "*It is appointed unto all men once to die!*" How swiftly the glorious dreamings of dawning youth, and the illusive brightness of terrestrial things fled before the gathering clouds, which swept up from the verge of the horizon of the "region and shadow of death." The mind, for a moment, sought for some avenue of escape—some resting place, which might afford the soul a ray of hope, that a respite could be gained; but the law reiterates, "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die!*" Conscience pleads guilty, and justice repeats the sentence: "*So death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned!*" When thus the mind is thrown back to grapple with a stern, impending reality, the first pressure of the chain is felt, by which death holds his captives in bondage to fear, and he

begins to exercise over the soul the iron rule of the King of Terrors. Now, to the groaning, desponding captive, galled and burdened by fruitless service—chilled and repulsed by a hopeless future, with what tones of gladness must the text come, throwing the radiance of eternal life, where all before was darkness and death! It is the voice of Him who hath the power of life and of death. It is written down as the eternal promise of Him whose word is ever fulfilled. It blunts the sting of death, and plucks the trophies of victory from the exulting grave; and that becomes a subject of delightful longing after, which, before, was an object of disgust and loathing.

The revulsion of feeling which takes place, when this glorious promise of the Spirit is relied upon, is so great, as to fill the soul with “joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Oh! wonderful, mysterious words! Pronounce him blessed upon whom, in the universal opinion of mankind, the greatest possible calamity has fallen? Who has passed to that bourne from whence no traveller returns,

“When thoughts
Of the last bitter hour come like a blight
Over the spirit, and sad images
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house
Make all to shudder, and grow sick at heart?”

Yea, saith the Spirit; from henceforth, “*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord!*”

This is, indeed, wonderful! A blessing for him whose eyes are for ever closed upon the “all-beholding sun,” the starry heavens, and the green fields; ay, in whose

“Lack-lustre, eyeless holes,”

The worms have held their banqueting; who has been forced away from the warm embraces of fond affection

—the halls of comfort and affluence, to lie in the cold chambers of the grave, and become

“A brother to the insensible rock,
And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain
Turns with his share and treads upon.”

Whose ear will never more listen to the

“Breezy call of incense breathing morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw built shed;”

Whose bosom is insensible alike to the endearing emotions of consanguinity and friendship—a blessing for such an one? Yea, saith the Spirit, from henceforth; “*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord!*”

However wonderful this may appear to our weak understandings, or contrary to the palpable evidence of our senses, it must, nevertheless, remain a glorious, death-disarming truth, since God, who hath commanded it to be written down for the consolation of his saints, cannot lie.

As we live in a world, over which the shadow of death darkly impends, where his power is constantly felt, and his advent beheld with fear, let us try and understand the import of this bright emanation of Divine goodness, that we may realize all the blessedness which it was designed to afford. And, as the blessing to be enjoyed is made contingent on a certain state of being, we will endeavor to determine what is implied by the phrase, “*In the Lord,*” as the blessing is dependent on the existence of this relation.

The words establish the fact, that a most intimate relationship is enjoyed. To be in a thing, is to be most closely brought into connection with it. We say of an individual, that he is *in* the Baptist Church—meaning thereby, that he sustains the relation of a member to this branch of the Church; of some other person, that he is *in*

a certain family—setting forth his individual identity with that particular family, as a whole. Thus, to be “*in the Lord*,” implies the existence of a vital union between God and the souls of the redeemed—an identity of character and interests; God dwells in them, and they in him.

In every relationship there is a well established principle, or law, by which it is brought into existence and justified. With men, the relation of parent and child, for instance, is the result of natural generation, or by virtue of adoption. But as man, in a state of nature, is an alien from God, the offspring of sin, and a citizen of the commonwealth of Satan, it can only be by adoption that he can be thus intimately associated with the Great Parent of life; and the manner of the Divine procedure, in forming this blessed intimacy with erring humanity, is plainly set forth in his holy word, that all may learn its provisions, and avail themselves of its benefits. “*As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name.*” “*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*” “*As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.*” “*Our life is hid with Christ in God.*” From these, and a multitude of parallel passages, we are certified, that whoever heartily receives the Lord Jesus, as his Saviour and Redeemer, by a living faith, is legally adopted into the household of God, becomes a joint heir with Christ in the kingdom and possessions of our Heavenly Father, and is held to be “*In the Lord*,” according to the import of the text.

With this brief setting forth of the nature of the relationship, requisite to secure the blessing, we proceed to illustrate the reasons for, and manner of, its enjoyment.

The first impressions which we have of death, is the fear which its contemplation excites in the mind, and which,

generally, is of so painful a character, as to embitter all the sweetest scenes of subsequent life. Through this distressing fear, the unbeliever is all his life-time subject to bondage; a cringing, trembling slave; bound by a tyrant whose fetters he has not the power to sunder; whose dominion he can in nowise escape. And, while he remains in a state of unbelief, he must ever stand a heartless coward; for, although he may make vigorous attempts to shake off his supineness, and meet the grim monster with composure and defiance, yet he finds, alas! that he only has been forging heavier chains for his own binding, and eclipsing, with thicker darkness, the gloom of his prison house; for the sting of death is sin, and while man continues in the ways of transgression, he is but adding to the power which death possesses, to hold him in the grasp of his iron bondage.

Now, the individual who has been adopted into the family of heaven, is blessed in death, because he is entirely delivered from this distressing condition. *"Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through the fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage."* "And if Christ shall set them free, they shall be free indeed."

There is no time when death so comes upon an individual "like an armed man," as when he is seen near at hand, and a conflict is momentarily apprehended with him. He is then no longer viewed as a being of undefined and visionary existence—a theme for idle speculations; but becomes a dreadful, stern reality. He is no longer looked upon as one whose advent will seal up for the judgment the eternal interests of others, but as

bringing us individually into this solemn relation to the searcher of hearts. It is under such circumstances that the scoffer and the unbeliever become confounded at his dread approach, and the frantic soul

“Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help;
But shrieks in vain! How wishfully she looks
On all she's leaving, now no longer hers!
A little longer, yet a little longer,
O might she stay, to wash away her crimes,
And fit her for her passage! Mournful sight!
Her very eyes weep blood; and every groan
She heaves is big with horror; but the foe,
Like a staunch murderer, steady to his purpose,
Pursues her close through every lane of life,
Nor misses once the track; but passes on,
'Till forced at last to the tremendous verge,
At once she sinks!”

A helpless, hopeless, pityless thing!

Not so with those who are “*in the Lord.*” When death comes to try his shaft on them, he finds that his sting is powerless. Christ has conquered this last enemy, and given to his followers an eternal victory. Sin, which gives point to the sting of death, he has cleansed away with his own blood; and the law, which gave power to sin to aim the blow, has been abolished, Christ having become the end of the law to those who believe. The Christian, thus armed with a divine panoply, not only meets the dread sovereign of the valley and shadow of death with firmness and composure, but with a certain confidence of final victory, which the, for a time, seeming triumph of death does not lessen. Indeed, so unshaken is this confidence, that they often long to engage in the fierce conflict, as death can only be successfully overcome by a seeming triumph. They shrink not from the encounter—the victory is certain.

Those who “*die in the Lord,*” are “*blessed,*” because they are delivered from the power and dominion of death:

"On such the second death hath no power." "For, good men only see death, the wicked taste it!"

The fears of death to the wicked might be tolerable, terrible as they are, were it not for the fearful looking for of a fiery indignation, after the dying pang is past. Having made no efforts to propitiate the favor of heaven, by seeking shelter and protection under the cross of Christ, they are left to realize, in its fearful import, that "God, out of Christ, is a consuming fire!" Hence, there is nothing which they will so much dread as the hour of dissolution, as they well know that it will bring them into the immediate dominion of him who hath the power of death, to endure the infliction of that torment, the smoke of which will ascend up for ever and ever, which is the second death, from whose dominion there is no escape.

But the believer apprehends no such result. Death has no claims upon him, and, in all his dark abode, there is no prison that can hold the "ransomed of the Lord." Christ has said, *"He that believeth in me, hath everlasting life."* *"They shall never die."* *"Because I live, they shall live also."* *"I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish."* And these precious promises fill the soul with "joy unspeakable and full of glory." The dominion of death is broken, and his galling manacles thrown off, and the exultant Christian freeman exclaims, in the glowing language of the victorious Apostle, "Oh! death, where is thy sting? Oh! grave, where is thy victory?" "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." "To live, is Christ; to die, is gain!"

"Death wounds to cure; we fall, we rise, we reign!
Spring from our fetters; fasten in the skies;
Where blooming Eden withers in our sight;
Death gives us more than Eden lost."

The Christian life is secure, for it is "*Hid with Christ in God; and when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.*"

Are we, then, immortal? Oh! then, we are "blessed" indeed! Death is not the frightful monster which he is so constantly represented to be; he is an angel of light and mercy, veiling his resplendent glories under the shadowy drapery of the tomb, lest the saints should become so much enamoured with his loveliness, as to hasten at once to leave this erring, darkened world, to dwell in his radiant dominion, and thus deprive the earth of the salt which has so long preserved it from destruction. His exit, through the frowning portals of the grave, is but to prevent those who are "*in the Lord,*" from crowding, with hasty, willing steps, the pathway to his mysterious dwelling place, so delightful and glorious, as soon as the gloomy exterior is passed. Can it be, that this body, soon to become inanimate, and waste to dust, can, and will, revive and live? that the eye, though dimmed with the film of death, will re-brighten, and sparkle with looks of recognition and love? That this lifeless body, once so loved, and embraced with the fondest affection and delight, but now so loathsome that it is looked upon with horror, and we bear it from our sight, and conceal it from view in the dark earth, will come forth more perfect and glorious than ever? Yea, saith the Spirit; from henceforth, "*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord;*" for "*It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*" Then shall death be swallowed up in victory. Oh! are they not "*blessed*" who *die* only to *live* for ever, in a state so infinitely above the most perfect condition of humanity, that it is "not worthy to be compared with the glory

which shall be revealed in us." We know in whom we have believed ; and the realization which we have already experienced, of the ability of Christ in delivering us from bondage to the fear of death, removes every doubt respecting the full accomplishment of his promises, that death shall have no dominion over those who have fled to him as the rock of their refuge ; and, therefore, we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be with him, and like him, fashioned after the pattern of his " glorified body," and immortalized in love and holiness.

" Oh ! happy hour, Oh ! blessed abode !
I shall be near and like my God !"

The Christian is " blessed " in " death," as it is to him a sweet release from the toils and weariness of human life :
" *They rest from their labors.*"

Rest, in this life, is an object of universal desire and pursuit ; and we esteem that man comparatively happy, who, by any proper means, succeeds in escaping, in any great degree, from the measure of weariness generally meted out to mankind. All men, like the homeless spirit, are seeking for rest ; and although they may have even four score years allotted to them, in which to prosecute the search, yet all meet at the grave's brink at last, without having gained the object of their longing ; they all alike find, that they are made to " possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed unto them ;" and they are led, at last, to choose death rather than life. The wicked, in a spirit of hopeless despair ; and the righteous, that they may go to that land, " where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

It is passing strange that men will toil life long to obtain the mere shadow of what they desire to possess ; and, while laboring to grasp the semblance of happiness, let the reality pass beyond their attainment. " *There*

remains a rest;" but few will enjoy it, because they are unwilling to "*labor*" that they may enter into it. The term "*labor*" brings the idea of exercise and effort, of weariness and fatigue, all of which man desires to shun; but whoever hopes to obtain rest, by avoiding the endurance of these, will find that a false rest is accompanied by far more pain and disquietude, than a life of the severest toil and deprivation in the service of God. All relaxation in this life, only lessens the probabilities of repose in that which is to come. Let all fear, therefore, lest, while there are such full and gracious promises of a release from the toils and anxieties of life, we should at last come short of its complete realization.

We are well assured, that the theatre in which we now act, is one of unceasing exertion and of bitter disappointment. It is a state in which we must wage an unremitted warfare and opposition to the world in which we live; to the flesh, whose depraved motions must be kept in check, and subdued; to the Devil, the great adversary, who is constantly seeking to destroy our souls, and who must be resisted with the whole armour of God, and with an unflinching steadfastness, or he will be triumphant. These things will keep the Christian in a constant state of activity; and yet, if he is truly seeking for an everlasting rest, he will not seek to shun the cross; but be happy in being permitted to approve himself unto God, "in much patience, in affliction, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in labors, in watchings;" yea, in "*always abounding in the work of the Lord.*" Paul desired, with the most intense emotion, to be freed from the dominion of sin: "Oh! wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" But he never once asked to be delivered from his arduous employment, as the servant of Jesus Christ, but rather

sought to multiply his labors; and when about to close his earthly career, his theme of exultation was, that he had "fought a good fight," and had "kept the faith;" and having done this, he could, with just propriety, appropriate to himself the glorious promises of future rest, and a "crown of glory."

Toil, then, is the highway to the celestial resting place; we must come up to its inheritance "through much tribulation." No respite is promised—none can be enjoyed this side of the tomb; and he who seeks to obtain it, does it by becoming recreant to his master, and at the expense of his own happiness. When we became fellow heirs with the saints, we pledged ourselves to be henceforth "*fellow helpers to the truth,*" and "*laborers together with God;*" and this pledge will not be redeemed, until death adds our names to the long list of those who have gone to people his mysterious dominions.

If the port is an object of desire to the half wrecked, tempest-tossed mariner; home, to the weary traveller; health, to the suffering invalid; and night, to the toil-worn laborer; then is death a "blessed" consummation to the fainting pilgrim of the cross. Then the toil is over, the rest begins; the conflict is past, the crown is won; the pain has been felt, the joy commences. And although labor, or rather activity, is not passed, since all are the messengers of God; yet, it is labor which brings no fatigue, nor aching limbs. We, doubtless, feel something like it, when we are engaged in the performance of that in which we experience great delight, and which it would be painful for us to discontinue: we shall then realize, in its fullest sense, what it is to "*serve the Lord with gladness.*"

Is, then, the toiling, fainting follower of the Lamb, who, overcome by the burden and heat of the way, drops

exhausted on the burning sands of the East, amid the snows of the North, the jungles of the South, or the plains of the West; or, who is equally worthy, he who falls amid the conflict on the "Home field"—are all these finally and completely blessed with rest and happiness? "*Yea, saith the Spirit, from henceforth; for they rest from their labors!*"

"There is an hour of peaceful rest,
To mourning wanderers given;
There is a joy for souls distressed,
A balm for every wounded breast;
'Tis found alone in heaven!"

There will be no more conflicts then with unsubdued lusts; all will be peace within, for all there will be pure. No more contests with foes without; for all will either be in glorious harmony with the whole family in heaven, or completely conquered. No more supplying the hungry with bread; for all will be fed from the bountiful table of Infinite Goodness. No more giving of a cup of cold water; for each can drink his fill of the river of salvation, whose waters will for ever quench the ragings of desire. No more wiping away the tear from the cheek of sorrow; for God will wipe away all tears, and assuage the very fountains of grief. No father watching with painful anxiety around the dying couch; for there is "*no death there,*" this last enemy having been slain. No more labor, no more watching, no more weariness, no more fears, no more death! Oh! indeed, this "*rest shall be glorious!*" for Jesus, standing in the midst of his "BLESSED DEAD," will say to each warring, toil-exacting spirit, "Depart hence! These are they who have come up through great tribulation, laboring hard to enter in to my promised rest, and now, henceforth, they shall '*rest from their labors.*'"

"They who die in Christ are blest,
Ours be, then, no thought of grieving:
Sweetly with their God they rest,
All their toils and troubles leaving!"

Lastly. They who "*die in the Lord*," are "*blessed*," because they receive the reward of their doings: "*Their works do follow them*."

They do not expect any reward on the plea of debt, or merit; for none are more emphatic in disclaiming any such pretensions, than those who really could present the best claims for so high a distinction. "Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name be all the glory," is their uniform exclamation. But although they disclaim any right or title to a reward, God in nowise intends that they shall go without a proper recompense for every labor of love. Although the Christian is blessed in a peculiar manner in this life, yet he is never fully rewarded for his labors and sacrifices while on earth. The body is not capacious and strong enough to contain the "*weight of glory*" which forms the measure of the reward which God has in store for those who love him; it must, therefore, die, that it may be raised embued with power sufficient for its endurance; and the sufferings of this life are designed to fit the soul for a more complete enjoyment of the future glory. Christians sow in tears, that they may reap in joy. God is grieving them on earth, that they may enjoy the peaceful fruits of righteousness in heaven; laying upon them light afflictions, that they may receive hereafter a "far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory!"

We have no standard by which we can approximate towards a just estimation of the value of those rewards which God will finally mete out to those who are found "*in the Lord*." The vocabulary of objects which men

esteem most valuable, is exhausted to furnish figures by which to give us any conception of their worth. Gold is only fit for paving the streets where they walk, and pearls and precious stones for adorning the entering gates to their glorious city of habitation. We are assured, however, that "GLORY, IMMORTALITY, AND ETERNAL LIFE," are conspicuous among the elements which go to make up the fullness of joy which will complete the blessedness of the righteous. But, with this dazzling array which confounds the imagination, we are informed, that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him!" What a glorious prospect! Its very contemplation is a "weight of glory;" what, then, must be the complete reality?

In this blessed hope, how do earthly possessions become debased and valueless. Death is the entrance to this glorious land. The way is short, and easy of travel. It only looks dark on the near side; once in, all becomes light. When we approach, it appears like the pillar of fire to the Egyptians, the blackness of darkness; but when its portals are safely passed, it becomes like the same pillar to the Israelites, radiant with the ineffable love of God. If men can brave the perils of the long and tedious route to California, for the possession of a few ounces of gold, shall the Christian shrink back from the way which leads to the dominions of death, when such peerless rewards await his arrival there?

What does death deprive us of, which it does not restore in an hundred fold? It takes life, but it gives back immortality. It removes from the world, but it ushers into heaven. It separates us from a circle of dear relatives and friends, but it introduces us into one infinitely larger, and far more worthy of our love and esteem; and

Jesus stands pledged to restore to our embraces those from whom death, for a time, separates us. It compels the believer to leave houses and lands, but gives, in return, a "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" and a "possession which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

Shall, then, those who labor and toil for the happiness and good of mankind, and the glory of God, and yet are rewarded by those for whom they labor and sacrifice, with injustice, scorn, and neglect; who finally die in rags, lying at some rich man's gate, desiring to feed on the crumbs which fall from his table, and no man gives unto them—shall all these, finally, receive a just recompense of reward? "*Yea, saith the Spirit;*" "*for their works do follow them.*"

What, then, does it matter with the Christian, though he be poor and despised of men, and cast out as the offscouring of the earth, and put to death as unfit to live; he shall not go unrewarded, nor be condemned when he stands at the judgment, where God will reward every man according to his works, whether they are good or bad.

From this investigation of the subject before us, we learn, that the startling annunciation it contains, is fully sustained; that, however opposed to the evidences of our senses, or abhorrent to our feelings, as we view death as it appears in the pallid and decaying corpse, the gloom of the grave, and the apparent loss of all sensation and emotion, it is, nevertheless, a blessed event to those who are in the Lord. So truly does this hold good, that it may emphatically be said of all so dying, that the "day of their death is better than the day of their birth," inasmuch, as it introduces them into a higher and more perfect state of being and enjoyment.

"Death robs us of all things," exclaims the sordid worldling. "To die is gain!" responds the expectant believer.—"Death is an eternal sleep," affirms the boasting atheist. "The dead in Christ shall awake, and come forth, incorruptible, immortal, and glorified," replies the confiding Christian.—"Death is the King of Terrors," tremblingly exclaims the unprepared traveller to the grave. "Oh! death, where is thy sting? Oh! grave, where is thy victory?" Shouts the trusting disciple of the cross.—"All that I have will I give for my life!" groans the dying lover of this world. "I would not live always," responds the emancipated follower of the Prince of Life.

"Away with death, away
With all his sluggish sleep and chilling damp,
Imperious to the day,
Where nature sinks into inanity;
How can the soul desire
Such hateful nothingness to crave,
And yield with joy the vital fire,
To moulder in the grave!"

Thus shrieks the shrinking voluptuary.

"Who, who would live away from his God,
Away from yon heaven, that blissful abode,
Where rivers of pleasure flow o'er the bright plains,
And the noontide of glory eternally reigns?"

Thus sings the enraptured saint.

Why this difference, when death, in its physical and apparent effects, is precisely alike in all cases? It destroys in all, or rather effects in all an entire change in the material of which our bodies are composed. It at once annihilates the existence of the natural senses; and the changes which it produces in the relations which mankind sustain to one another, and the busy scenes of life, it is one and the same to all, irrespective of character or condition. This difference is plainly dependent upon the

relationship which we sustain to Christ, as we have shown in this discourse. If we are connected to him by a living faith, death is disarmed and powerless; and he comes, not as the King of Terrors, but as a welcome messenger, to inform the weary pilgrim that the hour of rest has fully come—he touches the tired wayfarer with his potent wand, and he “sleeps in Jesus,” and passes to his reward in heaven.

But if strangers to God, and to the commonwealth of Israel, then death comes as the stern executioner of endless retribution; he strikes, and all the hopes of the wicked perish, and they sink into the abode of darkness and despair, to realize that

“There is a death, whose pang
Outlasts the fleeting breath;
Oh! what eternal horrors hang
Around the second death!”

And now, fellow sinner, let me exhort you, as you value the eternal interests of your deathless soul, that you at once make haste to secure an interest in the Redeemer’s love; that when you die, you may “*die in the Lord*,” and find a home and rest in heaven.

SERMON VIII.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST AN OBJECT OF GLORYING.

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“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”—Galatians vi. 14.

THE agencies, and the means employed in securing and promoting the salvation of men, have always created surprise in the minds of unbelievers. Our Saviour, when on earth, did not fulfil the expectations of the Jews. “Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence, then, hath this man all these things?” His death upon the cross, as a common malefactor, would seem to settle the question, that nothing good could proceed from such a source. In the progress of time, however, the Cross, which it was supposed would be the end of his pretensions, and of the hopes of his followers, became the foundation of his fame, and the watch-word of the whole Christian host. How different is the judgment of God, from the judgment of man! “Whosoever exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.”

It will be the purpose of this discourse to show, that *the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is a proper object of glorying*. In illustrating this proposition, it may be proper to consider :—

First. The Cross.

Secondly. The reason why we should glory in the Cross.

The Cross, in the New Testament, signifies :—

First. The wood on which our Saviour suffered. The cross was an ancient instrument of capital punishment. It was the punishment inflicted by the Romans on servants who had committed crimes, on robbers, assassins, and rebels. It was inflicted on our Saviour, on the ground of his *making himself a king*. Although all his doctrines were in opposition to rebellion, he was treated as a rebel.

Secondly. The Cross is used as an emblem of the difficulties, labors, and dangers of a Christian life. This is a life of self-denial, suffering, and danger. “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” “And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

Thirdly. The Cross is used as a symbol of the doctrines of salvation, revealed through the death of Christ. “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the Cross is, to them that perish, foolishness, but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.” Furthermore, this is certainly the import of the Cross in this text; “God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross, is revealed that merciful and gracious system of redemption which furnishes the ground of all our hopes. The Cross is, therefore, a central point,

around which is collected every interesting event connected with the developments of this system. It is the consecrated medium through which are transmitted to us the rays of light which proceed from the Sun of Righteousness. This is the sense in which the Apostle would glory in the Cross.

The Cross is, therefore, an object of glorying:—

First. Because it displays the infinite evil of sin. When we consider the character of him who suffered, and the nature of the suffering, we must be deeply impressed with a sense of the demerit of sin. Sin is odious and destructive in its nature. It is the abominable thing which God hates—the source of all the wretchedness in the universe. It is the fearful malady which has brought death into our world. For its punishment, eternal fires have been kindled up in hell. Certainly, it is a direful evil. Yet our Saviour *bore our sins in his own body upon the tree*. The intensity of his suffering indicates the magnitude of his burden. When in the garden, he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, “being in an agony;” he taught us what we must have suffered, had the whole crushing weight of that burden fallen on us. Had the gospel palliated the original offence, or compromised, in any degree, the great principles of truth and holiness, then we might blush to be considered its ministers, or its subjects. But when it displays, in all its features, the burning indignation of God against sin; an indignation so great, that it could be appeased only by the sacrifice of his own Son upon the Cross, we may be allowed to exult in the integrity of those principles which it embodies. “What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.” By the Cross we are crucified to the world, and the world to us. “How, then, shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

There is no compromise with sin, either in principle or practice. "Is Christ, therefore, the minister of sin? God forbid." Rather in the Cross are displayed sin's most offensive and odious features, and that tremendous curse which it so justly merits.

Secondly. Because it illustrates the infinite wisdom of God. The whole theory of redemption is a farce, or it is the most striking display of Divine wisdom which can be conceived by the human mind. Consider the authority of the Law-giver, the justice and necessity of the law, the fitness of the penalty, and the folly of the offence. Consider the highest power in the universe, pledged for the punishment of the offence. How can this punishment be escaped? It cannot be escaped. It cannot be mitigated. The majesty of the law prescribed for all worlds, where intelligence exists, must be sustained. How can it be sustained, and the guilty saved? This question is answered in that system of redemption alone, which is symbolized by the Cross. Infinite wisdom provided one, who possessed all the requisite characteristics for the accomplishment of such a work. It found a surety who had the ability to pay the debt, and to sustain no loss thereby, and who had the right to direct his ability as he chose. On the Cross was the debt paid, *the law magnified and made honorable*. Here was the sacrifice offered, which satisfied Divine justice, and made provision for the wants and the guilt of our degraded race. This is *the mystery of godliness*; these are the things *into which the angels desired to look*.

Thirdly. Because it displays the infinite benevolence of God. This consideration is presented, in all its fullness, by our Saviour: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting

life." Shall we contemplate the benevolence of the Father, in giving his Son—his only-begotten Son—his well-beloved Son? Shall we consider him giving up a Son so dear, to ignominy, to reproach, and to death? And will we not be able, in some degree, to appreciate the greatness of "*that love wherewith he loved us.*" Shall we consider the voluntary humiliation of the Son; his pilgrimage, his self-denial, his agony in the garden, and his unspeakable sufferings upon the Cross; and have we not here such an expression of love, as has never been made to man? "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." But it is true, that our Saviour offered his life for his enemies. What love is this! But again: Shall we consider the office of the Holy Spirit? He dwells with men. In our wretchedness and degradation, in our moral pollution and loathsomeness, he still continues with us, for *he is to abide with us for ever.* He dwells with us, for the purpose of purifying and elevating our natures—of qualifying us for the most exalted society—the society of angels and blessed spirits in heaven. And is there not in this, an expression of unmeasured benevolence from God to man? Well might the Apostle make supplication, that his brethren "might be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." And yet, who can comprehend what is incomprehensible? or who can understand that *which passeth knowledge?*

Fourthly. Because it reveals to us a system of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. It has already been suggested, that the sin of man brought death into the world: it exposed to hell. In man himself, there was neither help nor hope. Nor had he a right to expect help from any other quarter. His offence was great; it was

aggravated. He was in *his blood and in his gore*, and there was none to pity. Yet did God pity, and bring deliverance. The central point in that circle of means which brought deliverance, was the sacrifice of the Cross. It was from hence flowed the blood

“Which sprinkled o’er the burning throne,
And turned the wrath to grace.”

Through the sacrifice of the Cross, salvation is offered to the most degraded and miserable of our fallen race. Said the Apostle, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” Shall he who has been in captivity, rejoice in his ransom? Shall the emancipated servant rejoice in his freedom? Shall the guilty culprit, who, under the gallows, awaits the fearful retributions of a violated law, rejoice in the intelligence of a reprieve, and restoration to the privileges of citizenship; and shall not we glory in the Cross, which symbolizes our deliverance from the curse of that law which threatened eternal death? “Without the shedding of blood there is no remission.” But upon the Cross was shed the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sin. Here was the “fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.” Here was sacrificed “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.”

Fifthly. Because, as far as we can conceive, this is the only system of salvation which could have been devised for man. It is not proper, certainly, that we should limit the Almighty. His wisdom is infinite, and his resources are beyond our comprehension. Originally, we could not have conceived of any method of mercy. The circumstances of the transgression, and the character of the government of God, would have seemed to forbid

the hope. A system of mercy, however, was devised and brought into execution. But the means were peculiar. Certainly we can have no idea of any others, which would have been likely to accomplish the end. What greater effort of benevolence could have been made, than was made in the gift of an only and well-beloved Son? What more costly sacrifice could have been offered, than the sacrifice of him who "thought it not robbery to be equal with God?" Under what other conceivable circumstances could there have been such an union of the Godhead with the manhood, as we find in the person of the Mediator, who suffered upon the Cross? And yet, this union was necessary, in order to our redemption. Indeed, this thought is clearly intimated in the Scriptures: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" I will suggest, furthermore, that the passing by of the angels which kept not their first estate, is an indication that there is but one method of mercy for sinners. This method was perfected upon the Cross.

Sixthly. Because this system of salvation brings honor to God. Every thing which degrades the authority of the law-giver, degrades the authority of the law. Nothing which degrades the authority of the law, can be good, or useful. The system of salvation exhibited through the Cross, sustains, in the highest possible degree, the majesty of the law, and thus the authority of the law-giver. The government of God is good, and righteous, and it ought to be sustained. God himself is good, and just, and his

authority ought to be respected; his honor ought to be promoted. So far as we can judge, his own glory is the first motive by which he can be actuated. He, originally, existed alone, and his motives to action must have been derived from himself. His own glory may, therefore, with reverence, be considered a paramount consideration in all his works. But does not the redemption of man bring honor—glory to God? Is not the exercise of clemency the highest attribute of authority, when that clemency does not take the place of justice? It was a great work to create. At this development of Divine power and wisdom, “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” But still, *“there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance.”* Every Scriptural intimation which we have on the subject leads to the conclusion, that the greatest efforts of the wisdom and benevolence of God have been made in the redemption of man. And certainly, his highest glory consists in the exercise of these. What are the employments of redeemed sinners, and other blessed spirits in heaven? “And I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.” And again, “Saying, Amen; blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever.”

Seventhly. Because this system of salvation brings honor to man. Originally, man was in honor, but did not thus abide. He has degraded himself by grovelling superstition,

and beastly sensuality. He is ignorant, selfish, and helpless. But the gospel possesses a sanctifying power. Says the Psalmist, "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." By the Cross, we are "crucified to the world." Our pride is abased, but our nature is exalted. Is it an honor to a man to be freed from the dominion of lust, and avarice, and every degrading and besetting passion of the human heart? Is it an honor to him, to be elevated above the influence of those sordid and selfish considerations which control the most vulgar, and the most grovelling? Is it nothing to renounce our alliance with the worm of the earth—with the insect of an hour, and claim our kindredship to "the morning stars—to the sons of God?" Yet, this is the tendency of the Cross. It elevates us intellectually. Is not Christianity the foster-mother of science and letters? Is it not the harbinger of civilization and refinement? Is it not, at this moment, carrying the blessings of these to the ends of the earth? Is it not contributing, in every possible way, to the highest degree of intelligence throughout Protestant Christendom? It improves us socially, morally, and physically. Consider its influence in the promotion of civil freedom, and social order. Was it not the substitution of the peculiar doctrines of the Cross, for the traditions and sanctified follies of Popery, which gave the Reformers such power over the hearts of their fellow men? And this power is still felt. The chains which bound the minds and the hands of men have fallen off. Will it be denied, that the social state of man is infinitely better now, than it was when the gospel was first published? Certainly, it will not. But its primary object was to effect his moral condition. His holiness is his crowning excellence—his highest glory. And is there

more truth and goodness, justice and fidelity, where the gospel does not prevail, than where it does? Who will commit himself so far as to say so? But when this body is freed from the dominion of death, when the power of the grave is broken, when this corruptible puts on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality, then shall man *be crowned with glory, and honor, and peace.* If it is an honor to a man to fill up the measure of his being, to govern himself by that high and holy standard of intelligence and holiness which God has prescribed for his government, to depise the wasting and perishing interests of this world, and to seek an imperishable treasure in heaven—"an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away," then does the Cross bring honor to man. It is the symbol of every sanctifying influence which is exerted upon him; it is the foundation of his hope of "honor, glory, immortality, and eternal life."

Eighthly. Because the doctrines, of which it is the symbol, have made so deep and decided an impression upon the world.

The influence of these doctrines is to be considered, first, in its kind, which has been salutary, and salutary only. This thought has been anticipated, to some extent; but it presents a subject which is not easily exhausted. Has the influence of the gospel been good, or evil? The question can be readily answered. Facts will answer it. Should we consider its principles alone, we must be led to a favorable conclusion. These are perfect; I repeat, they are absolutely perfect. Were they practiced, a perfect morality would be the result. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to

all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Again, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men." Our Saviour and his Apostles inculcated, on all occasions, the necessity of civil obedience, and the practice of the social and moral virtues. Certainly, it would be difficult to conceive of a corrupt stream from such a fountain. They not only inculcated such principles, but practiced them. Could they, then, be *the ministers of sin*? But we have before us the practical illustration of these principles. The effects are salutary, and salutary only. The proof would fill a volume. Pure Christianity is like the "river of water of life." Let us carry out the comparison: *On each side of the river is there the tree of life, which bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.* I forbear extending the thought. No man can understand the influence of the principles of Christianity, without acknowledging the aptness of the illustration.

But the influence of these doctrines may be considered, secondly, in its extent. Says the Apostle, "The preaching of the Cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the *power of God*." This statement is strikingly illustrated in the effects of the gospel, as preached by its primitive ministry. Consider who they were; the disadvantages under which they were placed; the fearful odds with which they had to contend; the persecutions which they suffered; the prejudices, deeply rooted and inveterate, which they had to overcome; and, notwithstanding all, the success which attended their

labors. The sermon on the day of Pentecost was followed by the conversion of three thousand. This sermon was delivered in Jerusalem, within sight of the Cross, still stained with the blood of its hallowed victim. In a few days the number was increased to five thousand. In a few years there were a great number of disciples in every city and province of the Roman Empire. In the commencement of the fourth century the power of Paganism was broken, and the Cross was inscribed upon the banners of the conquering legions of Constantine. Shall I allude to the introduction and progress of Mohammedism? In the promotion of Christianity no weapons were used but those of truth, addressed to the understanding and the heart. The false prophet carried the Koran in one hand, and the sword in the other. The nations might choose between conversion, slavery, and death. But to one of the three they were compelled to submit, or to oppose face to face. The fairest portions of the earth were desolated, and millions of human beings fell beneath the sword and the battle-axe. Mohammedism was successful, but Christianity was more so, in a tenfold degree. Contemplate the crescent and the Cross, after a rivalry of a thousand years. The one is feeble, spiritless, sinking under its own weight; the other is full of life and energy, enlarging its borders, strengthening its posts, and looking confidently to the conversion of the world. Is there not, then, a power in the Cross, to awaken to attention and subdue the hearts of the most rebellious men? The truth is, it possesses a virtue, as a religious symbol, of which human reason can render no account. The effects of that virtue are visible to our eyes; we feel them in our hearts; but when we attempt to explain them, we find ourselves unable. Its power is mysterious, but invincible.

In conclusion, let me remark, that if we find in the Cross an illustration of the demerit and punishment of sin, of the wisdom and benevolence of God : if we find it a source of honor to God, and honor to man : if we find in it an illustration of the power of truth, in awakening, expanding, and exalting the human mind : if we find it elevating our affections, and desires, and hopes, and, finally, ourselves, from earth to heaven, certainly the Cross is an object of glorying. At its foot, it becomes us to fall ; behind it, to hide ourselves ; to acknowledge its virtue and efficacy ; and to devote ourselves to the promotion of the knowledge of that system of salvation of which it is the symbol.

SERMON IX.

THE SINFULNESS, FOLLY, AND DANGER OF DELAY.

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"Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."—Acts xxiv. 25.

"To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant," was a saying of the drunkards of Israel, in the days of Isaiah. But the expectation, expressed in this language, has not been confined to the times of the prophet, nor was it peculiar to the sinners of the holy land. Such has always been the fond calculation of every sinful, foolish, and self-deluding man. Each morning that he awakes, he sees the same sun, which he yesterday beheld rising to gild the heavens; he sees the same world around him; the same sky above him; and, as day passes after day, the continued recurrence of the same scenes deludes his practical judgment, making him feel as though these familiar objects were to remain for ever—as though his lot were fixed and changeless upon the earth. It is in vain, that reason remonstrates and protests against this delusion; in vain she whispers to him, that myriads, before him, have passed through these same scenes, and are now gone from them for ever—that soon a morrow will come, which

his eye shall not behold—that soon the worm of the earth must prey upon his body, while his soul must depart to a region far distant, and far different from this. In vain, too, the warning voice of the Most High speaks to him through his inspired word, admonishing him to “work while it is called to-day,” and assuring him, that soon “the night cometh, when no man can work.” He still lives on, the victim of voluntary delusion, and is often found expecting long years of earthly enjoyment, even when treading on the verge of eternity. Nor does he expect the morrow to be merely “as this day,” it is to be much “more abundant.” The future is expected to be far better than the past. In the dimness of futurity he discovers nothing but the objects of his hopes; he sees not the hindrances to their attainment; he sees not the new difficulties, perplexities, and disappointments that await him. He surrenders himself to the pleasing dream, that, at some coming period, all his projects will be accomplished, and all his desires gratified.

Such is the delusion, under whose influences all of us are naturally disposed to put off, to some future day, the work of securing our eternal salvation. This was the feeling under which Felix acted, when he said to the Apostle, “Go thy way, for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.” He had listened to the ambassador of God as he “reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,” until he was made to tremble, in view of his own condition. His judgment was convinced, his conscience aroused, and his soul alarmed. He felt that the concerns of eternity were too important and awful to be despised, or neglected; and he *resolved that he would give them his attention*. But his occupations were then numerous, and his temptations to go astray were strong; all things combined to make that season appear

to him peculiarly unsuitable for the commencement of a religious life. He hoped that some future season would be more convenient; and that *more convenient season* he determined he would embrace. Thus he quieted the remonstrances of his conscience, by a *promise of future amendment*; but this promise he *never fulfilled*. He often again sent for Paul; but never to hear him "reason about righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." His impressions speedily wore away; for we find him endeavoring to extort money, for his release, from a prisoner whom he knew to be innocent—one whom his own conscience had compelled him to recognize as one clothed with the authority of heaven. And when he departed from the land, he left this prisoner still in bonds, merely to gratify the vindictive feelings of the Jews.

Such was the course of Felix. Instead of finding a more convenient season, each successive season became less convenient; instead of becoming better, he became worse; instead of repentance becoming easier to him, it continually became harder. He learned, by his own experience, (what thousands, since him, have learned by theirs,) that, to *ensure our destruction, nothing more is needed than to defer our repentance*.

Felix, too, my friends, had, in all probability, more and stronger reasons for his procrastination, than any of *you* can alledge, to justify a similar course, which *you* may be pursuing. He had a *greater pressure of business*; for he was the governor of a large province, and accountable for its administration to a most strict and cruel master. He had *stronger temptations to pleasure*, for his great wealth and power furnished him with ampler means of gratifying his appetites and passions. If, then, the disastrous consequences of disobedience to the commands of Jehovah were not averted, or mitigated, in the case of Felix, by

any of those circumstances which *he* might have pleaded in extenuation of *his* guilt; how can we imagine that *similar*, but *weaker* excuses, will avail any one of *us*, when guilty of the same offence?

The service of God is every man's highest employment, his paramount duty, his only source of permanent profit and honor, his sole preservative from everlasting destruction. This work ought, then, to be commenced at the very earliest opportunity. The moment we first learn, that God permits and commands us to serve Him, we ought to accept this service with alacrity, and enter upon it with energy. Fully assured that the least delay in its commencement *may* be ruinous, and *must* be criminal, we wish to press, seriously and earnestly upon your attention, some considerations which exhibit the sinfulness, folly, and danger of all such delay.

First. *It is a folly and a sin, for any one to resolve to do, at some future time, that which is his duty now as much as it can be then.* The service of your Creator you feel to be a *duty*; and you *acknowledge* that you feel it to be such, by *determining that hereafter you will undertake its discharge.* But all the reasons which prove it to be a *duty*, prove that it is a duty *now*, and that there is as much obligation to perform it *now*, as there will be to perform it *ten, twenty, or thirty years hence.* "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation," is the language in which God addresses us. And again, "To-day, if ye will hear my voice, harden not your hearts." "He *now* commandeth all men everywhere to repent." It is asserted, or implied, in every argument, and every appeal which God addresses to men, that the moment they hear his voice, they are bound to obey it. Our reason and conscience, too, bear witness to the same truth. On what principle, then, can we justify our conduct

in withholding from God what is now his due? For a rational creature, guarded by his care, sustained by his hand, and enriched by his bounties, to withhold from Him his affection and services, is robbery of God. And how can such a course be palliated, or defended? Does it not proceed on the idea that our Maker exacts too much of us, and that we hope to evade the rigor of his demands? Is there not a wish, and an attempt to compound the matter with God, and put him off with less than his due? The debtor, who, when able to pay his creditors, should insist on their compounding, and receiving but a small portion of their just dues, would be considered as shamefully dishonest, and guilty. Is not the dishonesty *greater*, and the guilt *more flagrant*, when we wish to defraud our Maker of his lordship over us—when we wish him to be satisfied with but a portion of those services of our bodies and our souls, all of which he has a right to demand, and all of which he does demand?

Look at it further, and you will see that this conduct is as deeply marked with *ingratitude* as it is with *dishonesty*. God appeals to us as our Friend and our Father—as the Author and Sustainer of our lives—as the Giver of all our mercies, and asks us for our love and service *now*. But his appeals and remonstrances are alike in vain; we acknowledge the *obligations*, but refuse to make any *returns*.

When, therefore, a man determines to postpone the service of God to some future period, let him remember that it is a refusal, before the Searcher of hearts, to be governed, in his conduct towards Him, by those common principles of justice and gratitude which regulate his intercourse, even with his fellow men—a refusal to regard, in his conduct towards Him, those ordinary principles of morality, the disregard of which, in his actions toward his

fellow men, would not only bring down upon him the indignation and scorn of the virtuous, but would immure him within the walls of a prison, or drive him as an outcast from civil society. I leave it to your own consciences to estimate what must be the shamefulness and sinfulness of such a course, in the eye of Him who seeth all things in their true colors, and judgeth of all things aright. I leave it to your own consciences to conceive the *feelings* with which he must regard such a course, and the *punishment* with which he will visit it.

Secondly. *The postponement of God's service is the postponement of your own enjoyment.* If you will permit yourself to reflect calmly and seriously, you cannot fail to perceive, that a life of faith and dependence upon Christ, a life of obedience and devotedness to God, must yield, even in this present world, far more happiness than a life of worldliness and irreligion. A religious life is one that is accordant with the higher principles of our nature, and promotive of its perfection. Our Almighty Creator has, as a wise and kind father, framed all his laws with a view to the welfare of his children. He has not debarred us from a single pleasure, which could be enjoyed without injury; nor has he imposed upon us a single hardship, which is not, in some way or other, the means of increasing our felicity. That holiness from which men often shrink, as something irksome, unnatural, and unendurable, consists only in an entire abstinence from what is degrading and noxious, and the steady pursuit of what is ennobling and delightful. That God, from whose presence men would often hide themselves, and the very thoughts of whom fill them with apprehension, is the Being who is the light and the joy of the universe; is the One, of whom we are assured, "his love is life, and his loving kindness is far better than life." Look at the pleasures which religion offers to you even

here, and mark how every moment you remain away from her paths, you are depriving yourselves of the best enjoyments of which your nature is capable. Reflect upon the pleasure that might be received from communion with the Father of our spirits. "I will dwell with you, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: ye shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Need we speak of the high delight which such intercourse with the high and lofty One, must impart to a child of dust? Observe, too, the permanent pleasure that springs from confidence in God, and a sense of security amid all the changing scenes and threatening evils of life. To feel that "the arrow that flieth by day, and the pestilence that walketh in darkness," are alike controlled by one who delights in protecting us, and will permit no real ill to befall us; to feel "persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord;" to feel, that, under all circumstances, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." To feel thus, must certainly insure a *degree* and *kind* of enjoyment for the absence of which, no amount of worldly good can ever furnish an equivalent. The pleasures of an approving conscience, too, are found in the paths of obedience. Our sins do not rise before us, like ghastly apparitions, to terrify us, and threaten us with the vengeance of an offended God. We can look back, with tranquil satisfaction, on days spent in the service of God, and the nights in which our meditation on Him was sweet. We can realize the "blessedness of that man whose sin is

pardoned, and whose iniquity is covered." The hope of "an inheritance, that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away," is a source of additional blessedness to those who are walking in the paths of obedience. Most glorious things are spoken of the city of our God. To this, as their final dwelling place, the thoughts of such as trust that they are redeemed by the blood of Christ, are often naturally and necessarily turned. No clouds of adversity can ever shut out from their souls the light of an anticipated heaven; its brightness can illuminate the darkest dungeon, and its glories are most clearly seen, when the eye is dimmed by tears.

Even from this transient glance at the blessings which religion furnishes to us here, do we not discern sufficient evidence to satisfy us of the literal truth of the inspired declaration, that "her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace?" Is it, then, wise to defer, to a future season, the enjoyment of all these blessings? Is it wise to postpone the commencement of a course of life, which God recommends as a course of happiness, and which the concurrent testimony of the good and wise of all ages, declares to be pleasant in its progress, and glorious in its termination? You are now living on, from day to day, sensible of your inability to guard against the ten thousand accidents, any one of which may be fatal to you, yet without any higher being to confide in as your protector and friend—conscious of the guilt of many sins, yet with no security against the dread retribution which an awakened conscience may exact—assured that you are to exist for ever, yet with no hope beyond the grave—aware that you are a pensioner on God's bounty, yet a rebel against his government, and that, while living in his world, you are living under his frown. Is it not folly and madness to continue, even for a day, in such a condition?

Thirdly. Another clear proof of the weakness and evil of delay, is found in the fact, that, *as long as you decline to break off your sins by immediate repentance, and commence the service of God, you are busy in laying up materials for your own wretchedness—you are providing a store of pains and penalties, that must be endured in the subsequent part of this present life.* Many of the evil consequences of our sins remain even after their pardon has been obtained. God may, and does, pardon, upon repentance, and remit the punishment annexed, by his *moral* law, to our sins. Sins repented of, will *not* meet us in the *future judgment*; but the punishment that follows them from his natural laws—those painful consequences of our sins, that, from our *constitutions* and *circumstances*, we are made to suffer—*these he usually permits to remain.* Thus, a broken constitution is not repaired by a tardy repentance. God will not give back your property squandered in sin, your opportunities of usefulness and improvement neglected, and now passed away. Your evil habits and depraved tastes, formed by indulgences which his law forbids, will not be eradicated by a sudden resolution. Your depraved appetites and passions—those internal foes which you are nourishing to your own destruction, will cost you many a sigh, many a groan, and many a tear, in the struggle to overcome them; and their complete conquest, if ever effected, will, perhaps, only be effected by the dissolution of the body. How many dark hours are often spent, by one who has trifled and sinned away the better years of life, in looking back upon the past. How often does he see deeds done, which he feels that he could freely give a world, if he could only undo. He sees, perhaps, around him the ruin which he has wrought, but which he strives in vain to repair. He sees, fast drifting toward the cataract of destruction, those

whom his example had drawn, or his hand impelled into the stream. Escaped himself from the danger, his warnings and entreaties are addressed to them in vain—regardless of his cries, they hurry on to their doom—and he feels, that though he was once mighty to do evil, he is now powerless to do good. As he looks back upon the sins of by-gone years, he feels the bitter emphasis of the question, addressed by the Apostle to others in a similar condition, “What fruit had ye in those things of which ye are now ashamed?” He finds, by his own sad experience, the truth of the divine declaration, that “their iniquities, though pardoned, are *visited with the rod*, and their transgressions with *stripes*.” Thus we see Job and David, in advanced life, earnestly praying for the removal of the consequences of the sins of their youth. Thus we see Eli, in his old age, suffering the severest affliction, brought upon him by his sins of former years, in the training of his children. He was pardoned by God, but his criminal neglect caused his family to be dispossessed for ever, of their honorable station as chief priests of the tabernacle of Jehovah; while the misdeeds of his sons, Phinehas and Hophni—misdeeds, the result of his own weak and sinful indulgence—bowed the old man’s head with sorrow, and abruptly and violently precipitated him into the grave.

Why, then, should any one delay drawing nigh unto God, while, each moment of his delay, he is sowing the path of life with briars and thorns, which will pierce his soul in the days that are to come? Even a wordly poet, who marked the events of life with an eye unequalled for the comprehensiveness and accuracy of its observations, has told us, that

“God makes scourges of men’s pleasant sins
To whip them with.”

You are now plating those scorpion lashes by which your hearts must hereafter be lacerated. Will you delay the glorious and happy service of the Almighty, to continue in this work?

Fourthly. There is another loss of immense magnitude incurred by your postponement of the service to which you are urged. *You are losing the opportunity of treasuring up for yourself eternal rewards and enjoyments.* We are brought into the kingdom which God has prepared for his people, solely by the merits of Jesus Christ, received through faith. But our comparative standing in that kingdom depends on our improvement of God's grace, and the opportunity he gives us of honoring him, and purifying our own souls. As "one star differeth from another star in glory," so there are different degrees of glory among the ransomed inhabitants of heaven. The servant, who had gained for his master *ten pounds*, received authority over *ten cities*; while he who had gained *five pounds*, was set over *five cities*. Thus our Saviour himself has taught us, that he who has done little for Him, will receive comparatively little in the kingdom above; while nearness to the throne of the Most High, and large honors, will be awarded to him who, while on earth, has acquired much of his Master's likeness, and labored much for His glory. And think not that it is a matter of small consequence, provided we can only enter heaven, what may be our particular condition there. It will be, indeed, an unmerited mercy, for any of us to enjoy even the lowest condition in the abodes of bliss. But surely it is a noble and holy object of desire and effort, to attain the highest glory and blessedness which our Heavenly Father offers to us in his own courts above. This is no object of unholy ambition, and the pursuit of it can never lead us astray. Pause, then, before determining that you will

postpone, for the present, the work to which God invites you; and reflect that, by dallying for a time in the sinful pleasures of earth, even if you should ever gain admission to the realms of the blest, you may lose a station so superior to the one which will be attained, that the loss of its higher enjoyments, for even a single day, would be worth more than all the worldly pleasures combined, which have ever thrilled through the soul of man from creation's dawn down to the present hour. For it is certain, that the longer you delay the work of purifying your souls, and glorifying your Redeemer, the less of this work can be accomplished, and the less of your offered reward can be secured. Then, by all the heights of glory which may be reached, by all the nearness to God's throne which may be attained, by all the unspeakable joys that may be won, we would urge you to an immediate commencement of the service of Jehovah.

Fifthly. The danger and evil of your delay, is further exhibited by *the fact, that many, while thus acting, are led to adopt errors which for ever shut them out from salvation.* Why is it, that any man adopts the resolution, so seldom executed, that he will, by a future repentance, secure his salvation? It is because conscience, and a dread of punishment, haunt him with dismal forebodings, which he tries to dispel by promising to himself, that, at some future time, he will propitiate God, and escape his threatened wrath. But if any better means of satisfying his conscience, and conjuring down his fears presents itself, he will eagerly avail himself of it. The state of mind, then, which leads a man to determine upon a future repentance, predisposes him to the belief of some one or other of the various plausible and destructive opinions, which, if adopted, will stupify the conscience, hush the whisperings of fear, and lull the soul into false security.

Such errors present to a man, in this condition, a far more *effectual* remedy for the ills with which his soul is troubled, than the one he is using; for they not only offer him an exemption from the *present* trouble and annoyance of an *immediate* reformation, but they entirely deliver him even from the *distant* apprehension of a *future* irksome task.

Each one of you, who is now living in expectation of a future repentance, feels as if he can be in no danger of such an issue of his determinations: but so thought all the multitudes who, while waiting, like you, have been beguiled by deceitful errors into irretrievable woe. The Scriptures most clearly teach us, that God gives men up, while in this state, to believe a lie; so that their destruction is made certain, as *a just punishment of their unjustifiable and criminal hesitation* in hearkening to his calls. They perish, "because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." "For this cause," we are told, "God shall send upon them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Sixthly. It is folly to defer the service of God, when we know, *that the requisitions of his law are never relaxed*. His laws are unchangeable; for they are founded on our nature and our obligations; and these continue to be the same in old age as in youth. In our youth, God calls upon us for faith and love, repentance and obedience; and in our old age, he calls upon us for the same. But there is one important difference. To the young, who obey his call, God promises many advantages, which are not promised to those who are late in hearkening to his voice. When religion calls upon you in old age, her *demands* are the *same*, but her *offers* are *less*. In this respect, she reminds us of the Sybil of ancient story, who, though she destroyed a third part of her books of sacred lore, at each successive

refusal of the Roman king to purchase, persisted in demanding, for the diminished number, the same price at which the whole might have once been purchased. Defer till old age a closure with the offers of God, and you will find that he requires of you the same determined struggle against a corrupt nature, the same resolute denial of self, the same entire devotedness to him, which were required of you when first he invited you to enjoy his blessings. You must "take up the cross, and deny yourself." You must "crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts." You must "die daily unto sin, and live unto Christ."

We have said, that the requisitions of God's law are ever the same. They are so, in one sense—for God changes them not. But, if we postpone compliance with them, their requisitions will increase fearfully in magnitude and difficulty. In *themselves*, they remain as they were; but the change in *our characters* and *circumstances* will alter them greatly to us. When a spendthrift has wasted his resources in revel and debauchery, his debt may be the same which formerly pressed upon him, when his estate was unimpaired; but it now presents to him a very different appearance, and requires of him a very different degree of exertion to meet its demands. Thus, the neglected requirements of the Almighty, as our powers become impaired by continuance in sin, assume to us a very different appearance, and demand of us a very different degree of exertion, to enable us to fulfil them. This, however, naturally leads us to another very important consideration.

Seventhly. *The service of God is rendered more difficult and hopeless, by every day's continuance in sin, from the fact, that our sinful habits gain fixedness and strength by time.* Between the natural and the moral world there is here a most striking analogy. An oak, while it is a twig,

or a sapling, may be bent by a single hand, and trained to grow in any direction. But afterwards, when length of years has taken from it its pliability, and imparted to it firmness, the strength of an hundred men cannot straighten it. It will continue to grow on, as it has grown, spreading wide its branches in the air, and striking deep its roots in the ground, until the lightning shall blast it, or the tempest shall tear it from the earth. A spark of fire, too, which might be extinguished by a single drop of water, if permitted to kindle, may soon spread a conflagration which will wrap a whole city in flames. Look, now, at any sinful habit, and see if it does not thus accumulate strength by continuance, until it increases beyond all our power of control. In the case of the drunkard, the covetous, the ambitious, or the debauchee, we can mark the progress and the power of these habits most distinctly; and in the soul of every unconverted man, there is a similar process. He lives in the indulgence of many sinful habits of thought, of feeling, and of action. *Each one of these must be broken*, if he ever turns to God; yet the strength of each one of these he is now foolishly permitting to increase. You cannot, perhaps, see the growth of these habits in your own case; but mark them in the cases of others, and remember that your nature is the same with theirs. You see these evil habits gradually, but rapidly, acquiring strength, until they gain a complete mastery over the soul. It is in vain, then, that their victim groans under the oppressive tyranny which they exercise over him—in vain he struggles to throw off their intolerable yoke. Sometimes the slave of an evil habit is deprived of the power of gratifying his habitually-indulged appetite or passion; but this change does not deliver him from his servitude; it only increases the deplorableness of his condition. This appetite, or the passion, remains in

all the terrible strength which habit has given to it ; and, deprived of its means of gratification, it gnaws the soul like a viper of the pit. The wretched condition of such a victim of folly and sin, furnishes us with some similitude and type of the agonies of the damned, when their evil propensities will be developed in fearful energy, and all power of gratification be for ever taken away.

Now, will any of you delay turning unto God, until sinful habits shall become incorporated with your very existence—until every fibre of your soul shall be converted into a cord, to bind you down in slavery to sin ? Every moment you hesitate the evil becomes worse. You are like a man who shrinks from the pain of amputating a diseased limb. He cannot muster the resolution to endure a momentary pang, until the disease extends beyond the reach of the knife—until the limb mortifies, and his life is the forfeit of his cowardice and irresolution. Thus may your soul be the victim of hesitation and delay, until you are consigned to eternal death, by the fast-spreading disease of sin. Now is the time—if you intend ever to turn unto God—*now* is the time to execute your intention. Your evil habits now cling around you, and hold you back ; but now they are like *striplings* in the power with which they embrace you. Will you, then, wait until their strength and size be ripened by years, and until each one of them shall lay upon you the grasp of a *giant* ? Will you postpone this work, because it is *now difficult*, when you cannot fail to see, that it will become *immeasurably more difficult hereafter* ? Surely the folly of such delay can be surpassed by nothing but its criminality.

Eightly. The danger of deferring the service of God is further evinced by the fact, that, *the impressions produced upon you, by his truths, have a natural tendency to become weaker*. They become weaker, in accordance

with the general laws of our nature. Thus we find, that impunity, in any course, produces in us insensibility to its danger. The young soldier, when, for the first time, he enters the field of battle, is almost always agitated and alarmed; when he first hears the shock, the shout, the groans of war, his heart sinks within him. But each successive conflict, from which he escapes, unharmed, hardens his heart against fear; and when he has become a veteran—when he has been long accustomed to such sights and sounds, the roar of artillery, the flash of sabres, and the clash of bayonets, cease to produce their former impressions upon his mind. Even so it is with the soul, in view of those truths which God presents before us in his word, to alarm us, and urge us to repentance. Their tendency to impress us and awe us from ways of sin, is diminished by each successive presentation, when that presentation fails to produce in us any amendment. Even in diseases of the body, we usually find, that the more frequently a remedy is applied to a disorder, without effecting a decided and favourable change, the less prospect there is of its ultimate success. The remedy seems to become weaker on each successive application. The system appears to gain, from every failure, a greater capacity of resisting its effects. Thus we find it to be with the soul, in its resistance to these truths, which are furnished to us, by God, as the remedies for the disease of sin. When they are often presented without producing a change of life, they become familiar, and cease to excite any emotion. Are they denunciations of the wrath of God against sin, or descriptions of the woes to be endured in the dungeons of despair? They are heard, as we hear the howlings of a stormy blast, from which we apprehend no personal danger. Are they proclamations of mercy—invitations from our heavenly Father, to us wandering

and needy prodigals, to return and enjoy the rich blessings he is ever ready to bestow; or are they descriptions of the love, the sufferings, and the glory of our divine, yet condescending Redeemer? They are listened to, as we "listen to the song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and playeth well upon an instrument;" or perhaps the tale has been so often heard, that all its novelty and interest are gone, and it falls upon dull and listless ears.

Those very convictions of sin, which, for a time, soften the heart, and give us a dawn of hope for him who is their subject, unless they soon issue in conversion, become the means of hardening the heart, and consigning it to a gloomier, and more hopeless condition. The truths of God often fall upon the heart, like the droppings of water on the cold rock of the cavern. Instead of wearing it away, as we might expect, they petrify, as they fall upon it; thus increasing its hardness and its bulk, and covering it with an icy and impenetrable shield. So, too, the soul is encrusted by the droppings of truth, until it can be penetrated by nothing, save the fires of the pit.

In view, then, of these principles of our nature, and these facts, which all have observed, is it not, beyond measure, unwise and hazardous, to postpone, to a future period, all determination and effort to discharge the imperative duties which God has enjoined upon you? The discharge of these duties is necessary to your escape from hell, and admission into heaven; and the impressions received from God's word, are needed, to give you the ability to discharge these duties. Will you, then, postpone your determination to discharge them, till the impressibility of your nature shall have worn away, and the truths of God shall have lost all power over your soul? Cases may, and do, indeed, occur, in which,

sensibility to the truth does not thus wear away; but those cases are exceptions—they are cases in which the providence and grace of God resist and counteract the natural course and tendency of human events and human feelings; and such special interpositions of divine favor no man has a right to expect.

Ninthly. Another solemn consideration, which should urge you to an immediate compliance with the invitations and commands of the Almighty, is the *danger to which your refusal subjects you, of his immediately and for ever withdrawing from you*. God does often leave men to their own blindness of mind, and hardness of heart, and then their doom is sealed. "Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." Here it is intimated, that there is a time when he *may be sought*, yet *not found*; when, *though called on*, he will be *afar off*, and will *not hear*. The Scriptures teach us most clearly, that there is allotted to each of us a period or time for repentance. It is sometimes called, by the inspired writers, "a day of salvation," to denote, that if we neglect to secure salvation, then, it is gone from us for ever. Sometimes it is spoken of as "a season of visitation," to teach us that God then visits us, and if we do not receive him during that season, he departs from us for ever. Sometimes it is termed "an acceptable time," to warn us that we may then be accepted, and that if we do not then press for acceptance, we shall be rejected for ever. This day, or season, or time, is not always co-extensive with a man's life upon the earth. For we are told of some, that God "delivereth them over to a reprobate mind"—he "gives them up to their own heart's lusts, and to walk in their own counsels"—his "Spirit ceases to strive with them." Then "they grope for the wall like the blind; they stumble at noon-day as in the night." "Because,"

saith the Lord, "I have called, and ye refused; because I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded: but ye set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, and will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord." How awful is the condition of the man whom God has thus abandoned. He may be ignorant of it, but a sentence more fearful than that of Cain has been passed upon his soul. He may live in festivity and security for a few days upon the earth; but while sporting and rioting on earth, he is still the doomed inheritor of hell, and none of you can tell how long you may live in rebellion, before this sentence is past upon you. Perhaps your "season of visitation" may, if you repent not, close to-day—this very hour may seal your destiny. Will you, then, continue insensible to the calls of God? Is there a moment's time for delay? Delay not, unless you can ascertain the counsels of Jehovah, and know that your day of acceptance will be prolonged. If you reject God's invitation to-day, to-morrow he may disregard your cry.

Tenthly. The last consideration to which we ask your attention, as showing the folly and danger of procrastination, is your *constant danger of death*. To almost all, death comes "as a thief in the night." Very few, when their last disease attacks them, are aware that it is mortal; and myriads upon myriads are hurried into the eternal world without even a moment's warning. What, then, can give security to you for a single hour beyond the present? Can you arrest the hand of death, and stay it until you

accomplish your purpose of a future amendment? This very hour there are hundreds of human beings, like yourselves, who have passed from earth to stand before the dread tribunal; and perhaps the next hour you may join their throng. Amid all this uncertainty and frailty of life, are you still hesitating about commencing your duty to God, and complying with his imperative demands—demands on obedience to which your soul's happiness depends? You are jeopardizing your eternal destinies for the toys of an hour; you are sporting and dallying, as though you had length of days secured to you in your own right hand. If God would cut you down, as he has done thousands, while you are putting far from you the day that you are to choose Him for your master, who can depict the consequences to your soul? What must be the agony of him who, like the rich fool, mentioned in the gospel, is rejoicing in his prospects of earthly enjoyment, when he feels that the hour is come that his "soul shall be required of him."

"How shocking must thy summons be, O Death!
To him that is at ease in his possessions;
Who, counting on long years of pleasure here,
Is quite unpunished for the world to come!
In that dread moment, how the frantic soul
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement,
Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help,
But shrieks in vain! How wishfully she looks
On all she's leaving, now no longer hers!
A little longer, yet a little longer,
Oh! might she stay to wash away her stains,
And fit her for her passage! Mournful sight!
Her very eyes weep blood; and every groan
She heaves, is big with horror; but the foe,
Like a staunch murderer, steady to his purpose;
Pursues her close through every lane of life,
Nor misses once the track; but presses on;
Till forc'd at last to the tremendous verge,
At once she sinks to everlasting ruin."

But the fatal consequences of your delay will have only begun with this mournful scene. The agonies of that parting soul are as the joys of paradise, compared with the woes that are to commence beyond the grave. That death-bed of horror is a couch of repose, compared with the burning lake, on whose fiery billows the lost soul must toss, and toss for ever. "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever," is the language in which the voice of the Eternal pronounces the doom of the lost.

And now, my friends, *calmly* and *rationaly*, but *at once*, settle your determination upon this subject. Will you determine still to put off, to some future day, the choice of God for your master? In serving him, there is a great reward. Will you still decline that service? Ask those who, like yourselves, have delayed, for a season, yet escaped the dangers to which they were exposed, whether they do not regret the folly of their delay—whether they do not still feel its evil consequences; and whether it does not seem like a miracle, that they were saved from destruction? And will you still venture on in this dangerous and thorny road, when the way to heaven is opened wide before you, and you are pressed to enter in? At what future day, or hour, will it be easier to repent and turn to God? When will it ever be so easy? Look back upon your past life, and past feelings. Do you find yourselves growing better? Do you find the work, which you feel that you *must* undertake, becoming less difficult? If it be not, as you know it is not, then remember that, "the thing that hath been is that which shall be." Instead of becoming easier, this work will daily become harder.

Consider, too, the impiety of the *feelings which induce* you to procrastinate; and the impiety of your *determination*.

The feelings are feelings of dislike to God and his service; the determination is a determination to rob him, as far as you can do it safely, of those services which you know to be his due. For the accomplishment of your purpose of a future repentance, you are dependent on God. Can you ask him to *bless you in the formation of this purpose*, and *aid you to fulfil it*? Can you go and utter to him, in prayer, the language that would truly express your feelings and determination? Can you say, "I do not love thee, O God! I do not love thy character. I do not love thy ways. I do not wish thee to govern me. But if thou wilt permit me to break thy holy laws, and to serve the world and my own perverse inclinations, and wilt spare my life, and continue my powers, I will try, at some future time, to render thee a little service, in the hope that I may escape the punishment that I know must otherwise follow my sins. I pray thee, to keep me in the enjoyment of health and strength, and happiness and life, while I am daily refusing thy mercy, and trampling upon thine authority; and, finally, when I am satisfied with sinning, aid me by thy Spirit to repent, and bring me to heaven."

You would shrink with horror from uttering such a prayer. You would tremble at the thought of offering such an insult to the Almighty. But the *words* are not what God abhors, and the *thoughts* and *feelings* expressed in those words he reads in *your heart*, and in *your actions*. Pause, we entreat you, and reflect, whether this is not the language addressed to your Maker in your daily conduct. And if it is, what must be the guilt and the odiousness of that conduct in his sight? Nothing but the astonishing and unparalleled mercy of God induces him to spare any of us, even for a single day, while we are thus insulting and braving him. But even his patience does not endure for ever;

and your only security is in immediate submission to his will, in an immediate adoption of the resolution that the Lord shall be your God.

"Hasten, sinner, to be wise;
Stay not for the morrow's sun:
Wisdom, if thou still despise,
Harder is she to be won.

Hasten, mercy to implore;
Stay not for the morrow's sun;
Lest thy season should be o'er,
Ere this evening's stage be run."

SERMON X.

THE INTERCESSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

BY REV. GEORGE W. SMILEY,

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"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God."
—Romans viii. 26, 27

WHEN the redeeming God was about to finish his career of suffering on earth, and close his eventful life by the bloody baptism of the cross; to his sorrowing disciples, who were much cast down at the prospect of a separation from their beloved Master, he said, (while his heart yearned towards them with infinite tenderness,) "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you: and when he is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; *and he will show you things to come*—for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

Now, we conceive that every one who carefully peruses these precious promises of the Saviour, and compares them with the inspired account of their fulfilment on the day of Pentecost, and through the subsequent eras of the Christian Church, must come to the conclusion, that the Holy Spirit had a two-fold office to execute in his mission to earth; the one *extraordinary*, the other *ordinary*. His extraordinary operations were confined to a few, and shined forth for a few fleeting years, clothing the first ambassadors of the cross in the vestments of a heaven-accredited mission—illuminating the pathway of the apostles by the grandeur of miraculous endowments: every step they took, disclosing the solemn truth to all around, that the highest heavens had stamped them as HER envoys; and, careless of the applause of an approving, or fearless of the frowns of an opposing world, they marched forward, unfolding their high commission, as apostles of the Lamb. Holding in their hands a torch, newly lighted by the Holy Spirit, they explored the misty fields of the Old Testament revelation, and removing its hieroglyphic mantle, bade it stand out in its full enlargement and spirituality; while at the same time they lifted up the curtain of futurity, and showed things to come; bidding the world acknowledge their doctrines and teachings, by the sanctions of an unveiled eternity.

But, then, these extraordinary operations of the Spirit, ceased with the ministry of the apostles; and when St. John, that heaven-favored prisoner of Jesus Christ, passed from earth, to recline in the bosom of his Master in heaven, we are inclined to the opinion, that the Holy Spirit ceased his *extraordinary* operations, and that from that hour down to the present, not a single additional lamp has been hung down from heaven, to guide man's erring footsteps in the way of life. Nor do we believe,

that, during the whole coming period of man's probationary existence, will another item of doctrine be added to the charter of man's salvation.

But though *His* miraculous and extraordinary operations ceased more than seventeen centuries ago, his ordinary operations, as Convincer of sin, Quickener, Regenerator, Comforter, and Intercessor, have continued to bless the Church and the world down to the present hour; and, at this day, are in as full and efficient exercise, convincing of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment—testifying of Christ, helping our infirmities, and making intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered—as they were, when, fresh-edged by the blood of the Lamb, the Spirit's sword, in the holy city, swept thousands down before it.

To one point alone, in the *ordinary* operations of the Holy Spirit, we purpose to ask your attention in this discourse; and that is, to his office as a *Helper of our infirmities, by making intercession for us with unutterable groanings.*

In the context, the Apostle had been reviewing the sources of the Christian's aid of the Holy Spirit, but it conveys the idea of a conjoint effort; that is, the Christian essays to pray, but, on account of infirmity, or weakness, is not able to pray aright; and, therefore, the Holy Spirit comes to his aid, and makes up the deficiency. He does not—mark—take his place, and pray in his stead, but he “*HELPETH*,” assisteth; so that, when the Christian's efforts are put forth, the Holy Spirit assists, and directs them into the right channel, and toward the proper objects; hence, the Bible directs man to keep his heart in the love of God, by “*praying in the Holy Ghost.*” And, for the purpose of enabling him to accomplish this great object, the Spirit of God takes up his abode, as an intercessor, in the heart of every follower of the Lamb. “Likewise the

Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for, as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered."

Now, of all the offices performed by the Holy Spirit, in the great remedial scheme, there is not one more important than that which he fills as intercessor for the saints.

First. It is important,—BECAUSE IT IS THE ONLY MEDIUM WHEREBY WE CAN HAVE ACCESS TO THE EAR OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER.

Let us look, for one moment, at the relationship which man sustains to the personalities of the Holy Trinity. God the Father, in his own word, is represented as being the Sovereign of the universe; hence, says the Psalmist, "The Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods." The transgression of his holy law, by man, caused him to retire into the pavilion of his holiness, and to expel man from the presence of his Sovereign; and but for the remedial arrangements, devised by infinite wisdom to meet the exigencies of the case, the *first* transgressor would have been executed, as a rebel against the government of heaven, and all the race would have perished in their federal head. To save our race from this sweeping, all-embracing destruction, the Son of God undertook our case, and, by an amazing stoop of condescending mercy, became the peculiar victim; and, by his sufferings and death, succeeded in placing God upon a throne of grace, approachable by every sinner; so that all the descendents of Adam are included in the overture of the Gospel, when it invites them to come "boldly to a throne of grace, that they may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Now, the question arises, and it is one of thrilling moment to every accountable being, "*How may I approach that throne of*

grace?" Our answer is, **THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.** Let us not, however, be misunderstood on this subject. We are calling attention to but *one*, out of many important points involved in the scheme of man's gracious recovery; and, therefore, it is not our object to dwell at large upon the merits of the blood of Christ. It is true, *most true*, that his blood is all-essential to man's recovery; for if Christ had not shed his precious blood, the offer of pardon would not have been extended to man—the gates of Paradise would not stand open, nor angels be found at the portals, inviting him in to banquet upon the Tree of Life in the Heavenly City: nor, but for the shedding of *his* blood, would the Spirit ever have acted the part of an intercessor for man.

But, then, on the other hand, it is likewise true, that the *work* of the Holy Spirit is as essential, to restore man to the image of God, as is the *blood* of Christ to restore him to the favor of God. "The blood of Christ stoops to the judicial destitution of man, and, relieving him from the *penalty* of sin, restores him to the favor of God; while the Holy Spirit stoops to the moral destitution of man, and, relieving him from the *disease* of sin, restores him to the image of God." The **WORK** of the Holy Spirit is as essential to the salvation of the soul, as the **SUFFERINGS** of Christ; and, therefore, in calling your attention, in this discourse, mainly to the Spirit's agency, we would not be understood, by any one, as disparaging, in the least, or as throwing into the slightest shade, the blood of the Lamb. With reverential gratitude, we would write on every blessing, **THE PRECIOUS GIFT OF JESUS' LOVE.**

What we wish to fasten upon your minds, is, the intercessory work of the Holy Spirit. And, therefore, we re-affirm, that the Holy Spirit, in his office of intercessor, is one great and essential agent in our approach to the

throne of grace. This is the view given of this matter by the great Apostle, when he says, "Through him we both have access, *by one Spirit*, unto the Father."

In this passage, God the Father is represented as a king, seated upon his throne, and the Spirit and the Son as agents, by means of which, the children of men are introduced into his august presence.

The sphere of the Son's intercession is in heaven, before the throne; hence, says the Apostle, "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." The sphere of the Spirit's intercession is in the hearts of the saints, inditing, and presenting the petition into the hands of the great High Priest, who ever lives in heaven to make intercession. *And there is no other medium of access, but through these two intercessors.* No petition from earth is ever presented to the Father's ears, who is seated upon the throne of pardon, but those that are presented from the golden censor of the mediating Lamb; and no petition ever reaches *that* golden censor, but those that are indited and originated by the Holy Spirit on earth. Hence, the only medium of access, is, as the Apostle declares, through Jesus Christ, by **ONE SPIRIT**. "Through him we both have access, *by one Spirit*, unto the Father." The intercession of the Holy Spirit, then, in the hearts of the children of men, is, in the *first place*, essentially important; as, without his aid, no voice of prayer would ever pierce the ear of heaven—no cry for pardon would ever bring the blessing down. Man, expelled for transgression from the court of his sovereign, would have to wander on for ever, in hopeless and unpitied banishment, from the presence of God and from the glory of his power. But the Holy Spirit (all glory be to his holy name,) stoops to his rescue, and affords

him the means of speaking; so that his voice may be heard in heaven, even by the ear of his offended Maker.

Secondly. It is important,—BECAUSE THE SPIRIT REVEALS TO THE SOUL ITS TRUE WANTS; hence, says the text, “*We know not what to pray for, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us.*”

This intercession is not made by the Spirit in *direct* supplication, such as Christ makes by his blood, or voice, in heaven. The Holy Spirit carries on his intercession through the agency of the individual supplicating, and his first step towards accomplishing the work of intercession, is, to make the soul feel its needy situation. This he does in the heart of the *sinner* by convincing him of sin, of righteousness, and of a judgment to come; by pointing him to the dark lowering storm that is gathering on Sinai's brow, to the wrath of God that is burning in its folds, and to the unshielded position his soul occupies at its trembling base.

He accomplishes his work in the heart of the *saint*, by revealing to him his poverty in the things of the Spirit—his ignorance of the knowledge of Christ; by pouring his shafts of heavenly light into the deeper recesses of the soul, showing to him the festering roots of bitterness that still remain there, enfeebling the strength of his graces, and poisoning the springs of his enjoyment. And all this is done to put the soul in that frame, in which, fully submitting itself to the Spirit's guidance and control, it allows him to work with his energies, unhampered by the unyielding stubbornness of man's rebellious will; for, until man feels his wants, he will not be likely to put forth efforts to satisfy them. So long as the *sinner* does not feel the need of a Saviour, he will not be likely to seek after the strength of his redeeming arm. So long as the *Christian* does not feel

the plague of a corrupt heart, he will not be likely to seek, with deep complaint, with unutterable groaning, after a clean one. There must first be a thirsting of soul, before it pants to drink of the living well of salvation. There must be a hungering, before it seeks to feed, with avidity, upon the bread of heaven. And hence, the first step in the Spirit's process of intercession, is, to make the soul feel its helpless and almost hopeless condition; to pour upon it such a startling sense of its own barrenness, and to excite such a vehement and earnest hungering and thirsting after righteousness, that the soul feels it *must* have help out of Zion, or perish. And when the heart feels these deep abasings of spiritual poverty—these intense desires for spiritual emancipation—when the burden becomes too heavy to be borne, the Spirit then changes his mode of operation. Suspending his work, as an *abaser*, he comes to man's aid as a blessed **HELPER** of his infirmity, and enables him to roll all his guilt, and care, and burden, along the blood-reared pathway of Christ's atonement, into the presence of the pardoning succouring God, at the foot of the mercy throne. Hence, says our text, not only that we know not *what* to pray for, but that we are as ignorant of the *manner* as of the matter. "We know not what to pray for as we *ought* : but the Spirit itself helpeth our infirmities."

Thirdly. The intercession of the Holy Spirit is important,—**BECAUSE IT TEACHES THE SOUL TO PRESENT ITS WANTS IN A PROPER MANNER.**

This he does, by leading the soul to plead the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Now, as it regards the mere mode of presenting our petitions to God, it is of but little importance. The man may stand erect, and address the throne of grace. He may bow the knee of supppliance, or, in reverential awe, fall prostrate to the earth. He may

present his petition arrayed in all the elegancies of human diction, or he may present it in broken thought, with language lame, yet none of these circumstances either add merit to, or detract from his supplications. His petition, to be recognized in heaven, must be perfumed with the blood of the Lamb; and, to have it thus ascend before the Lord, as a sweet smelling sacrifice, it must be *inspired* by the Holy Spirit. And this brings us back again, to an indwelling, interceding Spirit in the heart. *All true prayer must be the offspring of the Holy Spirit.* And, blessed be God, the Bible teaches the gracious doctrine, that, in every child of God, the Holy Spirit takes up his abode as an intercessor. "For he dwelleth with you, (said Christ) and shall be in you."

Now when the soul is made acquainted with its true wants, the Spirit then unfolds Jesus as the medium of prayer, and teaches it to plead, at the mercy seat, the all-prevailing merits of his blood. And when guilt has been weighing down, as with a mountain load; when unbelief, as a strong man armed, has been pressing sore the citadel of faith; and when the blows of the assailant have been so vigorous, that the outworks have begun to totter before them; how sweetly has the spirit pointed the downcast eye of him that was standing afar off, to the precious promise written on the arms of the cross, "Ask what ye will, in my name, and it shall be done for you, of my Father which is in heaven." And, as his humble faith grasped hold, and began to rest upon those words of hope, what wrestling for deliverance—what groanings for the mastery arose in his soul. And when doubt, and guilt, and unbelief surrendered, and the soul was exulting in the enlargement of a triumphant deliverance, whence came those desires for the mind that was in Jesus—for that singleness of eye, that makes the body full of light—for the

meekness and lowliness that was in the Lamb? It was the Spirit that resided within you, stirring up the slumbering spirit of prayer—breathing afresh upon the smouldering affections of the heart, and drawing you away, and out from yourself, to God, *in mighty prayer*. While you were wrestling, he was inditing, helping, sealing, carrying it on his wings to Jesus. Now, drawing back the curtain a little way, that the eye of faith might catch a glimpse of THE KING in his beauty, stretching out, in peerless loveliness, his golden sceptre, to his advancing Bride; and then stirring you up to yet mightier efforts, by a fresh baptism of blessings, obtained for you by his intercession, and poured in all the richness of heaven upon the soul, what refreshing vigor you then felt; every nerve of the moral man was strung, and in active operation, pressing onward in the race, for holiness, *for happiness*, FOR HEAVEN. And yet there was no weariness, no lassitude: your soul had a firmer tread; your faith had a stronger wing; and you realized, by blessed experience, the meaning of that rich promise in the Old Testament Scriptures, “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.”

The Spirit was then in full play, as an intercessor, in your heart; and every event, every circumstance in your history, became an occasion for prayer; every blessing poured into your lap of rejoicing, sent an ejaculation to heaven; every cross in your journey, took you on a visit to the *throne*. No matter whether it was a temptation of the spirit, or an affliction of the flesh; a dark providence, or a bright one; you breathed it into the ear of your Father in heaven.

You felt, too, the connections binding you to others, and you took their wants, and their blessings, their joys, and their sorrows, along with you to the throne of Grace.

And thus, in the heavenly temple, before God and the Lamb, in the presence of all his holy angels, you presented the sublime spectacle of a spirit feeling its common brotherhood with the species; rejoicing with those that did rejoice, and weeping with those that wept. And, while you were thus sharing, by your sympathies, the sorrows and rejoicings of others, and besieging the throne of grace on their behalf, God drew nigh to your own soul, and your prayers for others returned into your own bosoms, freighted with rich covenant blessings. And thus, by all these delightful exercises, you were girded for the conflict, strengthened for the hour of trial, and made meet for the joys of heaven. But we must not overlook, in this connection, the understanding subsisting between God the Father, and the Holy Spirit. *"And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God."*

In this great work of intercession, there is a perfect understanding between the Father and the interceding Spirit. "The Father," the Searcher of hearts, "knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit;" and, in consequence of that knowledge, he fully understands the *nature* and worth of every prayer that is presented before the throne.

The Spirit operates, in his interceding work, in the hearts of men, and makes man the channel through which his intercessions ascend to the throne; and, therefore, they may be more or less attuned with the dross and darkness of the interceding medium, of the darkness and carnality through which the Spirit has had to struggle in causing his intercessions to be heard in heaven. Yet, no matter how clouded or confused, how much so ever admixed with the base elements of a tainted materialism, God fully understands the desire and meaning of the

Spirit. No matter in what form the prayer vents itself—in what habiliment it comes up before the throne—whether presented in a definite form and outline, or in a confused and tumultuous breathing forth of desire—God, who knows the mind of the Spirit, knows from what quarter they arise, whether they originate from the breathings of her own pure spirit, residing in the heart, or whether they issue from a soul pouring forth a stream of its own corrupt desires. He readily distinguishes the counterfeit from the genuine; and to every prayer, bearing the tinge and stamp of the Spirit's exciting, His ear is open, His hand is ready to pour forth a tide of blessings, the richest that can emanate from a THRONE ON WHICH IS SEATED A GOD OF LOVE.

Oh, how inconceivably precious, to have a God all merciful, a God all gracious to go to in prayer. And then think of your privileges and aids in every approach to His mercy throne. There is your blessed Advocate in heaven, Jesus Christ the righteous, diffusing, all around, the sweet smelling savor of his own most precious sacrifice. Then, there is that blessed helper of man's infirmity, the Holy Spirit, ever dwelling in the heart, stimulating the soul, arousing its dormant activities; and taking its first feeble aspirations, in a heaven-ward flight, towards the throne of "the high and lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity." And then, over and above all, is a God of truth—delighting in mercy—delighting to pour down blessings around the pathway of the needy—a God searching the heart—a God reading the mind of the Spirit—a God fully understanding the character of every prayer. The burdened sigh, that heaves from the troubled breast, goes up before Him; the shining tear, that trembles upon the cheek of penitence, or leaps from the heart surcharged and bursting with gratitude, for sustaining, succoring, conquering grace,

falls warm upon the heart of God, and moves the active sympathies of the Deity on man's behalf.

Come, then, Christian, come to the altar of prayer, when from out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and pour forth before him the opulence of a heart swelling with rapturous acclamation; or come when the soul is barren, when the mouth is dumb through shame or poverty of language, when there is naught in the soul but a spirit of prayerfulness, breaking forth in breathings that are not articulated, or in groanings that cannot be uttered; and if the Spirit moves thee, you will find that the eye, the ear, the heart, the hand of God, are all open, and all engaged on your behalf; for whenever the Spirit excites the prayer, He makes intercession according to the *will* of God, and this is the reason why the feeblest sigh, and the most enlarged desire, alike unlock the treasures of His grace. Go to God with a worldly mind, with carnal desires, with a heart panting after earthly distinction, honor, or aggrandizement, and no heaven ascending breath from the Spirit wafts such requests on high; they fall back upon the unwatered soul of the utterer, leaving all more dry and barren than before. But when spiritual desires burden the heart, when the soul thirsts for God, for the living God, and pants for the sprinkling of atoning blood, for the water of life, as the "hart panteth for the cooling water brook," vastly different is the effect of prayer; every groan, every sigh, every reaching out of the heart after God, is carried up and whispered by the Spirit in heaven; and back he comes, in answer, shaking from his wings the blood of sprinkling, and the dew drops of life over the soul.

Blessed be God and the Lamb, when the Spirit moves the heart in prayer, no matter from what heart the groan ascends, only so it is a broken and contrite one, that prayer

moves the heavens. The human eloquence of a prayer is nothing before God; it is the Spirit's voice that gives it eloquence in heaven. No matter from what zone of earth the prayer ascends, whether it comes from the heart of the rude Laplander, who drives his rein-deer sledge far down the frigid north; from the polished European, who moves in all the blandishments of civilized society; or from the dark Nubian, who roams amid the torrid sands; God understands in all the Spirit's pleading; and no matter whether the prayer is uttered in the Hebrew, Greek, or Sanscrit language, it is interpreted, by the Holy Spirit, in the vocabulary of heaven, and God draws nigh, in answer, and blesses the waiting heart.

Our subject, thus explained, helps us to understand the *origin* of those prayers that are oftentimes mysterious even to the utterer. The Bible teaches us that, in the utterance of their prophecies, the holy men of old were oftentimes ignorant of the force and meaning of their own predictions, and they are revealed to us in the singular attitude of first announcing things to come, and then assuming the character of inquirers, endeavouring to ascertain the substance of the things predicted, being found in the language of the Apostle, "*Searching* what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified *before hand* the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." And thus it is that, frequently, holy men are at a loss fully to comprehend their own prayers. Often an indefinite, undefinable burden and anxiety comes over the heart, leading forth the soul in intense groanings, felt, yet not fully understood, conscious of a deep earnestness, yet the object so clouded as not to be plainly grasped and apprehended by the mind. This groaning, and breathing forth of the heart, was caused by the Holy Spirit brooding

upon the soul, and, in its mysterious undulations, drawing it out to God in prayer.

Again. How often is the soul, when rejoicing in victory, and walking forth in the ease and strength of a spiritual enlargement, led to pray, with intense earnestness, for strength to be supported in its spiritual combats; and how often has a sorely contested battle, immediately ensuing, taught the soul, that these agonizing wrestlings for strength were but the fore-shadowings of the Spirit, announcing a *coming conflict* with principalities and powers, and leading it forth, by anticipation, to the heavenly hills for aid, that it might be enabled to endure the fiery trial.

Again. How often are good men, not suspecting danger nigh, led to pray for *providential aid* in a coming emergency; and, in answer to those prayers, how often has the arm of God been visibly made bare on their behalf, and rescued them from danger or death, by evident divine interposition. Again, and again, the "Ebenezer" has been erected; and, bathed with tears, the heart has sent up its gratitude to heaven for the prevalent intercession of the Holy Spirit.

Lastly. The intercession of the Holy Spirit enables us to understand the mysterious power of prayer. Prayer is not the simple voice of a mortal pleading with God. *Praying in the Holy Ghost, is the Spirit of God taking hold, through the Son of God, upon the heart of God the Father; it is Divinity in the soul, pleading with Divinity in heaven, and overcoming through the promises of heaven.* "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." And here we are lost amid the grandeurs of our theme.

"Prayer has divided seas; rolled up flowing rivers; made flinty rocks gush in fountains; quenched flames

of fire; muzzled lions; disarmed vipers and poisons; marshalled the stars against the wicked; stopped the course of the moon; arrested the rapid sun in his great race; burst open iron gates; recalled souls from eternity; conquered the strongest devils; commanded legions of angels down from heaven. Prayer has bridled and chained the raging passions of men, and routed and destroyed vast armies of proud, daring, blustering atheists. Prayer has brought one man from the bottom of the sea, and carried another in a chariot of fire to heaven. **IT IS THE LITTLE NERVE THAT MOVES THE MUSCLES OF OMNIPOTENCE.**

SERMON XI.

WONDERFUL: THE NAME OF CHRIST.

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"And his name shall be called Wonderful."—Isaiah ix. 6.

ISAIAH lived and prophesied in an age when vital piety had sadly declined amongst the professed people of God; and overwhelming calamities were beginning to threaten them. They were a sinful nation—a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that were corrupters. They had forsaken the Lord, and provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger. Isaiah was sent to them with "heavy tidings." Foreign invasion, a desolating war, and long years of captivity, in a strange land, awaited them. Still, God would not forget the few, who, in the midst of general corruption, were faithful in his service, and who wept, because of the approaching desolations of Zion. For their encouragement, the vision of the prophet was extended to a brighter day in the history of the Church—to the advent of Him who was to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel." He saw him in the manger of Bethlehem, and he exclaimed, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." He saw the beginning of his public ministry in the land of Zebulun and of Naphtali, and he said, "The people that

walked in darkness, have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." He traced the progress of his kingdom on earth, and witnessed its glorious results; and he said, "Of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end; upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth, even for ever."

The name of this mysterious child, this mighty king, shall be called WONDERFUL. His name shall be expressive of his character and of his works. He is a wonderful Being; and the work he came to accomplish, is a wonderful work. The meaning and the appropriateness of this name, will appear, from the following considerations:—

First. In Him are mysteriously united, in one person, two infinitely different natures. This most important doctrine is clearly taught in the immediate context. He is a *child* born, a *son* given. We are at no loss to understand the meaning of the words *child* and *son*. They naturally and obviously signify a human being, possessing a material body and a natural soul. When the father of John the Baptist said to him, "And thou, *child*, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest," we know he meant, by the word *child*, a human being; and we have as good evidence, that the same is true of him of whom Isaiah prophesied.

But this child, this son, is called *The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father*. Can we be at a loss to understand what is meant by *the Mighty God*? Turn to every place where this language is used in the Bible, and you will find it, in every instance, used as one of the names of Divinity. Magistrates and angels are called *gods*; but no creature, however exalted, is called the Mighty God. Shall we, then in order to escape from the doctrine of the

divinity of Christ, give to the language, in this particular passage, a meaning infinitely different from that which it has in every other passage, where it occurs in the Bible? To do so, would be to abuse the language of inspiration, instead of interpreting it.*

But he is also called *The Everlasting Father*. Why is he so called? The name, *Father*, is generally applied, in the Scriptures, to the first person in the Trinity. The literal translation of the Hebrew text, would be, *the Father of Eternity*. Some, indeed, have supposed the language to refer to the future, not to the past; but there is no good reason for limiting the word, since it naturally means *eternity*. The prophet, therefore, could have used no stronger language to express the idea, that the Messiah exists from eternity, without beginning of days. This mysterious Being, then, is a man; and yet, he is the Mighty and Eternal God!

The same doctrine is taught, in language equally clear, by the prophet Micah: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting."† That this is a prediction of the advent of Christ, there can be no doubt. It was so understood by the Jews themselves. When Herod inquired of the priests and scribes, where Christ should be born, they answered by quoting this text: Matthew ii. 3—6. In this passage, we have distinctly presented the human and divine natures of Christ. He was to be *born* of a virgin, in Bethlehem; and yet his goings forth

* This language occurs in the following passages of Scripture, viz: Gen. xlix. 21; Deut. vii. 21; Neh. ix. 32, Job xxxvi. 5; Ps. l. 1; Ps. cxxxii. 2, 5; Isaiah x. 21; Jer. xxxii. 18; Hab. i. 2.

† Micah v. 2.

have been from of old, even from everlasting; or, as literally translated, *from the days of eternity*. As to his human nature, it began to exist, when begotten of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary; but his divine nature existed from eternity. Therefore, he is truly man, and truly God.

This doctrine was taught by our Saviour himself, when he silenced the Pharisees, by asking, "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" They were, as they thought, prepared at once to answer: "They say unto him, The Son of David." But, another question involved them in inextricable difficulty; "He saith unto them, How, then, doth David, in spirit, call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?"* It was true, that Christ was David's son; but it was also true, that he was David's Lord; for David had addressed him as such, long before his incarnation. How, then, could he be David's son, and yet David's Lord? Believing the Messiah to be a mere man, the Pharisees could not answer the question; and the same difficulty presses all who deny his true and proper divinity. For, if, as the Socinian contends, he was only a man; then, he could not have been David's Lord. If, as the Arian contends, he was a super-angelic being, but not possessed of real divinity; he was neither David's son, nor David's Lord. But, if, as the great body of professing Christians have always believed, he possesses both the human and the divine nature; all difficulty disappears. As to his human nature, he is David's son; as to his divine nature, he is David's Creator and Lord.

And this doctrine is distinctly taught by the Apostle Paul. He speaks of Christ as "made of the seed of

* Matthew xxii. 41—44.

David, according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the Spirit of holiness.”* He was the seed of David, *according to the flesh*. The word *flesh*, as used in the Scriptures, sometimes has its most literal signification, viz: flesh, as distinguished from other kinds of matter. Frequently it is used in a bad sense, meaning *depravity*. “They that are *in the flesh* cannot please God.” In other instances, it means human nature; as, when it is said, “Oh! thou that hearest prayer, to thee shall all flesh come.”† In this sense it is evidently used by the Apostle. He teaches, then, that Jesus Christ is the seed of David, as to his human nature; or, as he is a *man*. Then the phrase, “spirit of holiness,” evidently means his divine nature. As to one of his natures, he is the son of David, and, therefore, a man; as to the other, he is the Son of God, and, therefore, truly God.

Some imagine, that the phrase *Son of God*, necessarily implies inferiority. This, however, is a mistake. With man, the Son possesses the same nature and attributes which the Father possesses; and, consequently, is equal to his Father. It is true, the Father exists before he has a Son, and there is a sense in which the Son derives his life from his father; but, as we have already shown, the Scriptures teach, that the Son of God has existed from eternity; and, therefore, in his case, the ideas of priority and dependence cannot be admitted. The phrase, “Son of God,” therefore, is used to express that particular and incomprehensible relation, which, from eternity, exists between the first and second persons in the adorable Trinity. The Jews so understood it; and, therefore, when Jesus called himself the Son of God, “they sought

* Romans i. 3, 4.

† Psalm lxxv. 2.

the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said, also, that God was his Father, *making himself equal with God.*"*

Accordingly the Scriptures abundantly teach, that Christ was the Son of God before he became incarnate. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," &c. And when Jesus was about to finish his work, and bid adieu to earth, he prayed, saying, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."† And as the only begotten Son, he not only bears the image of the Father, but "is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person."‡ Such language would be wholly inapplicable to the most exalted *creature*. He who is the brightness of the Father's glory, must possess the divine nature and perfections.

The doctrine of the divine and human natures of Christ, is beautifully and strikingly taught by our Lord, when he says, "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." How can he be both *the root*, and *the branch* of David? Just as he can be both the son, and the Lord of David. As he is God, he is the root of David; as he is man, he is his offspring or branch.

Often, during his ministry on earth, did he display these two natures in intimate and mysterious union. As a *child*, he "increased in wisdom and stature." As a man, he oft sat weary by the way-side, and often needed repose in sleep. Yet he opened the eyes of the blind, caused the deaf to hear, and the lame to leap for joy. At the grave of Lazarus, he wept like a man; but he called the dead to life with the voice of God. Like a man, he slept in the hinder part of the vessel, when the storm raged on the

* John v. 18.

† John xvii. 5.

‡ Heb. i. 3.

lake : like God, he said to the winds and waves, "Peace, be still." Like man, he fainted under the weight of his cross, as he ascended to Calvary, and then expired on the cross in deepest agonies : like God, he rose on the morning of the third day, conquering death and the grave, and resumed his place on the throne of God.

And now, having all power in heaven and in earth, he reigns, "head over all things to the Church." Being omnipotent, he "upholds all things by the word of his power;" and, in his infinite wisdom, he exercises a universal and particular providence. And "he must reign, till he hath put all things under his feet." And then he, God-man, will sit upon the throne of his glory, and judge the world in righteousness. "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." His name is Wonderful.

Let no one object to this doctrine, because of its mysteriousness. You have a body, and a mind—two distinct and widely different substances, strangely united in one person, acting and re-acting upon each other. Matter, of which the body is composed, is divisible and inert. Mind is indivisible and essentially active. In every leading feature, these two substances are unlike, and opposite. Do you comprehend their union? Can you explain how the mind looks out through the eye? or how, through the ear, catches sound, and is charmed with music? Is not the mode in which your two natures are united, and in which they mutually affect each other, a profound mystery to you? And if you cannot comprehend the union of your own two natures; is it wonderful, that the union of the two natures of Christ, is incomprehensible? And if you have evidence of the existence of so great a mystery in your own person, may there not be abundant evidence of a greater mystery in the person of Jesus Christ?

Secondly. Jesus Christ is wonderful *in the work he came to perform*. He was *the light* of the world, the great "Teacher come from God." And, in this work, he was wonderful. "Never man spake like this man." His all-seeing eye penetrate the hearts of those whom he instructed, and saw, most clearly, all their secret springs. "He knew what was in man." With astonishing wisdom, he adapted his instructions to the people, imparting the most exalted wisdom to the unlearned. Unlike the philosophers of Rome and Greece, who confined their instructions to the educated classes, he descended amongst the masses of the people, and made them wiser than pagan philosophers. As an evidence that he was the promised Messiah, he sent word to John the Baptist, in prison, saying, "The poor have the Gospel preached to them." He manifested wonderful skill, in striking the consciences of wicked men, and arousing them from their sinful security. Mark his answer to those who, though themselves most ungodly, brought to him a woman taken in adultery, and said, "Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?" He saw the vileness of their motives, and he knew perfectly the vileness of their lives. After they had importuned him for an answer, he said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last." This is one example. The Gospels contain others equally striking.

His public ministry was characterized by wonderful tenderness and benevolence. Love brought him from heaven to earth; and that love was expressed in every discourse he delivered. It was in Nazareth, where he had spent the earlier days of his life, that he delivered one of

his first discourses, after he entered upon his ministry, founded upon Isaiah lxi. 1; and the inspired historian says, "All bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth."

Wonderful, indeed, is that light, which Jesus poured upon the dark minds of men; a light which, in its first dawnings, is as the twilight of the morning, but which "shineth more and more unto the perfect day." It reveals to the mind the most glorious being in the universe, and exhibits, in beautiful and majestic harmony, his attributes and perfections. It shines upon the narrow pathway to heaven, and guides the immortal soul in its journey to its glorious home in the heavens. It is a light, the first rays of which fall upon the mind in this world, the bright effulgence of which shall be seen in that world of which the Lord God and the Lamb are the light.

It was a wonderful *sacrifice* which Jesus offered on Calvary for the sins of men. He saw them slaves to sin, and under the curse of the broken law. That law is "holy, just, and good," and, therefore, immutable—immutable in its precepts and its exactions. "All had sinned, and come short of the glory of God." The fearful penalty of the law had been denounced against them. They were condemned already. No man, no angel, nor all men and angels could effect the deliverance of one sinner. All were lost. Then, said he, "Lo I come, (in the volume of the book, it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God." He was "made under the law, to redeem them that are under the law." Standing in the stead of sinners, having become their surety, he was treated as a sinner. He was made "sin for us." "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree." He endured for us the penalty of the broken law; "and,

by his stripes, we are healed." Thus the law was honored, and God can "be just, and the justifier of him that believeth."

Wonderful were *the sufferings* endured by the Son of God, in effecting the salvation of his people. "He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Nor shall we ever comprehend the full import of his language, when, as he retired with his disciples to the Garden of Olives, he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" nor, the deeper anguish of his soul, when, on the cross, he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Wonderful was *the love* which induced him to submit to such humiliation, and to such suffering. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be rich." His love was the more wonderful, as it was exercised towards his *enemies*, whose moral character he could not but abhor. It was such love as was never before manifested. "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet, peradventure, for a good man, some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Wonderful is *the glory* which Jesus designed, by his sufferings, to secure to those who trust in him. The Church, composed of the redeemed, he will present to himself "a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." To each of his disciples he gives eternal life; "a crown of glory and honor, that fadeth not away;" "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." They shall stand in his presence, where "there is fulness of joy," and for ever behold his glory. Eternity shall be the duration of their joys, and the ever increasing

capacities of their souls the measure of their wisdom and of their bliss.

He is wonderful in his *providential dealings* with his people. Having triumphed over death and the grave, he ascended to glory, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Exercising all authority in heaven and in earth, he is now "the head over all things, to his Church." He has undertaken to conduct safely to heaven, all who have trusted, or shall trust in him. His unseen arm is their defence, and his hand supplies their wants. But he leads them often along a difficult way, and subjects them to many disappointments and sore troubles. At times, they are ready, in their distress, to say, "Deep calleth unto deep, at the noise of thy water-spouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." His Church, too, is called to pass through fiery trials. At one time, grievous error enters it unawares; and its beauty fades, and its strength is weakened. Age after age has witnessed the triumph of error, whilst truth was trampled in the dust. At another time, the enemies of Christianity rise in their might, and cause the blood of the most faithful to flow in torrents. Yet, all the while, Jesus Christ loves his people and his Church, far more than they who grieve because of the troubles through which they are called to pass. His purposes are infinitely benevolent; and he is leading his people in the right way. For the present, trusting in his infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, but unable to understand his ways, we can but exclaim, with the devout apostle of the Gentiles, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." We may yet rejoice to know, "that all things do

work together for good to them that love God ;” and that, in a better world, where we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known, we shall for ever admire “his manifold wisdom.”

Jesus will appear wonderful, *when he shall come to judge the world in righteousness.* When he dwelt on earth, he was seen in his humiliation. The glories of his Divinity shone but dimly through his humanity ; and his enemies, mistaking him for a feeble man, treated him with gross indignity. But, “when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.” His appearance will be wonderful ; for he “shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire.” “Behold, he cometh with clouds ; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him : and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.” And, says John the Apostle, “I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away ; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened : and another book was opened, which is the book of life ; and the dead were judged out of those things, which were written in the books, according to their works.” With infinite wisdom will he then bring into judgment every secret thing, and, with infinite accuracy, weigh every character in the balances ; and before the assembled universe will he vindicate all his dealings with men.

To all eternity his name shall be called Wonderful. His two natures, mysteriously united, shall never be separated. Humanity is for ever enthroned with Divinity. How often, during the eternal ages, will the story of his incarnation be told, and the wonderful history of redemption repeated to admiring intelligences, it may be, from other

worlds. For ever shall the peculiar song of the redeemed be heard and admired in the New Jerusalem; and for ever shall the eyes of all holy beings turn, with adoring delight, to the wonderful God-man!

REFLECTIONS.

First. It is a wonderful *salvation* of which we are partakers. It is *so great*. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation." The Apostle attempts not to tell *how great* it is. No language could convey an adequate idea of its greatness; and no finite mind could adequately conceive of it. It is deliverance from hell; and who can comprehend the degradation and misery of a lost soul? We have seen men unhappy; we have seen them in great sufferings, mental and physical; perhaps, we have seen them in agony. But we have never seen a human being perfectly miserable, and in absolute, black despair. Oh! the fearful degradation and woe of a lost sinner; who can conceive, adequately, of his condition? From all this, the salvation wrought out by Jesus Christ, delivers us. It is "*so great*."

But this salvation not only delivers from hell; it makes the penitent believer a child of God, and an heir of heaven. It raises him from deep degradation, to dwell with angels. It does more; it places him on the throne with the Son of God. For it is written, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne." It gives to him a crown of glory, and honor that fadeth not away. It is a great salvation!

It is an *eternal* salvation. All other deliverances are from temporal evils; and their benefits are confined to this short life. But it is the *soul*, the immortal part, that is the

special object of the gospel salvation. It saves from eternal evils; it secures eternal bliss. Compared with its duration, ages dwindle to a point; cycles of ages are as nothing. It is a wonderful—wonderful salvation!

And what is more wonderful than all, *it is FREE*. It is the gift of God. It is more: it is a *gracious* gift—a gift to those who merited only perdition. Its invitations are to “the chief of sinners.”

See, to the vilest of the vile
A free acceptance given!
See, rebels, by adopting grace,
Sit with the heirs of heaven.”

“Without money and without price”—this is the proclamation. “And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Glad tidings, these, to sinners lost; who have no righteousness; who can bring no price; who are debtors, to an incalculable amount, and have nothing to pay. Come freely; come, and welcome, the chief of sinners. For, saith the Saviour, “Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” This salvation is as wonderful in its freeness, as in its greatness.

And yet it is a *costly* salvation. Free, and yet costly; and as costly as free! The price of it, was the blood of the only-begotten Son of God; his sorrows, groans, tears, and death. He gave his life a ransom for his people. Justice demanded it, and he honored the demand. Made under the law, to redeem those that were under the law, he was made a curse, and thus redeemed them from *its* curse.

“There’s ne’er a gift his hand bestows,
But cost his heart a groan.”

And will ruined men reject such a salvation? Will they delay, for a moment, to accept it with joy and gratitude? What punishment can be too great for those, who, for the trifles of earth, “neglect so great salvation,”

and trample under foot the blood of such a Saviour? Angels desire to look into its glorious mysteries; and will infatuated men, for whom such a salvation was provided, turn from it with cold indifference? How fearful the depravity, that can so harden the heart against the tenderest appeals, and so blind the mind to its eternal interests!

Will not the awakened, trembling sinner, come to Christ without delay? Your sins may be numerous and great; but greater far is the salvation of Jesus Christ. You may be most unworthy; but he came to save sinners.

Secondly. Let us, from this subject, learn to take our proper place, as *disciples*, to learn and adore. It brings us to the contemplation of that adorable mystery, *the Trinity in Unity*. The *being* of God, is infinitely above our comprehension. No wonder, then, that the *mode* of his existence should be so. And, then, the union of the human and divine natures; who can comprehend it? We cannot comprehend the union between our body and mind; no wonder, then, that we find a deep mystery in the God-man. Indeed, the Gospel itself, with all its rich provisions, is a *mystery*, in one of the senses of that word. It presents a plan of salvation, which no human wisdom could have discovered. It is, therefore, purely a matter of revelation. And it reveals to us the purposes of the infinite Jehovah, beginning, if we may so say, in eternity past, and extending through an eternity to come. Of such a Being, and such a system of truth, what can we know? Limited in our faculties, blinded by sin, we can do nothing more, even with the aid of Divine grace, than learn the elementary principles. "We know in part." Yet, we may know all that is necessary to a pious life, and to the salvation of the soul.

But, how does this subject, properly viewed, rebuke that bold spirit of speculation, which has so often characterized "philosophy, falsely so called," and which has driven so many into dangerous error, and even to infidelity! "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Our true position is at the feet of the great Teacher, receiving, with the docility of true disciples, his wise instructions.

Thirdly. Gratitude and praise are eminently becoming, in those who are partakers of this great salvation. Let their gratitude be shown, by the unreserved consecration of themselves to the service of their Redeemer. "For," saith Paul, "ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be made rich." Let us, then, say with this same Apostle, "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that, if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

Fourthly. To the disciple of Christ we may reasonably say, "Rejoice evermore." He has a Saviour who is ever with him, causing all things to work together for his good, and who is able to save to the uttermost. Troubles may come upon his children; but his grace will enable them to "rejoice in tribulation." Temptations may assail; but, says an Apostle, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." The world may array itself against them; but they hear the

voice of their Redeemer, saying, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Calmly and joyfully may they look upon all the temptations, trials, and sufferings of this life, and exclaim triumphantly, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us."

SERMON XII.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

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"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, *and be raised again the third day.*"—Matthew xvi. 21.

MAN, in being deprived of foreknowledge, was more than compensated in the gift of hope. Deprived of this, no rank, or position, avails us anything. Possessed of it, we are happy in a dungeon, in affliction, or in the darkest hour of adversity. As the old man leans on his staff for support, so does frail humanity, by the aid of hope, pass through this life. Philosophy, in its sublimest lessons, teaches *us* to *bear*. Religion, teaches *us* to HOPE. In time's arid desert, there blooms not a more beautiful, a more fragrant rose than this. Like the philosopher's stone, it turns all that it touches to gold. How delightful! how important its exercise!

The foundation of the Christian's hope is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. If Christ rose not from the dead, then is our preaching in vain, and your faith is in vain, and you are yet in your sins. The resurrection of Christ is the basis of our hope. If he was not raised, our hope is a splendid hallucination, a taunting dream, a bitter mockery. The resurrection of

the Saviour is the hinge on which the truth of Christianity turns. This vital doctrine of religion will be the leading topic of this discourse.

Before proceeding farther, it may not be out of place to make two or three explanatory observations in connection with the text. It is said, in one of the Gospels, by Christ himself, that he would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Crucified on Friday, and buried late on that day, Jesus rose early on the first day of the week. One day and two nights only was he in the grave. With the Jews, a part of a day was put for a whole day. Christ was in the grave a part of Friday, on the Jewish preparation, the whole of the Jewish Sabbath, and a part of the first day of the week, or the Christian Sabbath. This was the sense in which he was three days and three nights in the grave. In confirmation of this exposition, it may be stated, that the Jews, who had perfect knowledge of all these things, never brought a charge of falsehood against the Apostles, who, in almost every sermon, preached that Christ rose on the third day. It is likewise said, that Christ should be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. It is certain he was not deposited, in burial, in the centre of the planet on which we live; nor was it so understood, either by the Jews, or his disciples. Language is conventional, and must be taken in the sense of those who use it. To be in the heart of the earth, is a Hebraism, and signifies, with us, nothing more than burial. These must not be regarded, in themselves, as matters, of great importance; but, in connection with Christ, as subjects of prophecy, they are entitled to the greatest consideration.

The resurrection of Christ from the dead, is a topic, in religion, of no ordinary importance. The Apostles preached it in almost every sermon. It should be a

prime, a fundamental article of faith in every creed. It should be the creed of every creed. It is not sufficient that we believe it without a vestige of doubt; but we should be able to give a reason for the hope that is within us. To believe a fact, or occurrence, without evidence to support it, is the part of bigotry, or enthusiasm, and not of enlightened Christianity. Christ's resurrection is a *fact*, supported by evidence of the most irrefragable character. To believe, it is only necessary to examine.

The resurrection of Christ, and the raising of our bodies, are inseparably connected. They are related, as cause and effect. To treat them, to some extent, together, would be right and proper. Any arguments used, to prove that Christ rose from the dead, may be regarded as so many arguments in favor of the fact, that our bodies will be raised. Arguments, adduced in support of our resurrection, may, according to the most rigid rules of logic, be taken as so many arguments to prove that Christ did arise from the dead. There is a mystical union and oneness between Christ and the human family. We are the branches, he is the vine.

That these mortal, decaying bodies of ours, will be raised from the dead, is not only clearly taught in the sacred scriptures, but numerous analogies, in nature, strongly corroborate the fact. These analogies, in the light of revelation, assume a degree of importance not to be overlooked or disregarded, by the candid inquirer after religious truth.

Ancient philosophers complained, that the sun, moon, and stars went down, and rose again; but that their friends died, were laid in the grave, and returned no more. Had they enjoyed the light of revelation, the sun, moon, and stars, in their appointed courses, would

have preached to them the doctrine of the resurrection. When Pythagoras saw the loathsome, crawling worm developed in the butterfly, he espoused the doctrine of Metempsychosis. He is more to be pitied than blamed. Had he enjoyed the teaching of the scriptures, phenomena of this character would have led him, not to preach the transmigration of souls, but the resurrection of the human body after death. In all ages, there are circumstances, connected with the transformations going on in the lower departments of animated nature, strongly suggestive of this fact. We behold a small egg, then a loathsome crawling worm, the caterpillar skin is thrown off, death ensues, and then it is shut up for months as in a tomb. In this state the animal is termed a chrysalis. Remaining in this condition for a time, apparently without life, it bursts its imprisonment, and comes forth a beautiful butterfly. If such astonishing and beautiful transformations occur in the lower departments of animated creation, what may we not look for in respect to man, "the noblest work of God."

The farmer sows his grain, which sends up a germ in the act of decay, producing abundant fruit. The Apostle alludes to this, as a type of the resurrection. Wearied and fatigued, we repose in slumbers, and rise invigorated from sleep—the emblem of death. Behold a representation of the doctrine in question! We are now in the midst of the gloom of winter. Nature seems dead. The clouds are ready to weave a snowy winding sheet for its grave. But, to such of us as live to see it, nature, with new life, new vigor, and new beauty, will emerge from this wintry death. And thus may we, after the long winter of death shall have past, come forth, by the power of the resurrection, into an unfading and unchanging spring of bliss and immortal glory.

An objection to this pleasing doctrine, has been urged with all the virulence and malice of infidelity. The objector points to the changes, real or imaginary, going on in the human form, and marshals them forth to affright the Christian from one of his dearest, most cherished hopes. The substance of the objection (if substance it has) is this, that the laws of nature have it in their power to defeat the declared purposes of Him who made those laws, and gave them their force. My faith is not so palsied, not so nervous, as to be terrified at such a spectre. The individuality, and personality of the body, results, not from figure and shape, but from the mind. Take two children, in extreme infancy, place them in the same room, let them breathe the same atmosphere, and eat the same food, and the matter of their bodies is the same, yet they differ in appearance, one from the other. Why is this? It doubtless results from intellectual and moral qualities. It is the *mind* that gives identity and individuality to the one and the other. When the soul returns, at the last day, and, by appointment of Christ, claims its dust, and unites with it, then will it stamp its own image and individuality on it, and this will be its own body.

As it regards the above analogies, it must be borne in mind, that the God of Revelation is the God of nature. Revelation and nature, instead of being in antagonism, mutually shed light on each other. We should study revelation, to understand nature; and nature, to understand revelation. Both must be studied, in order to comprehend, fully, the character of God, and the Gospel, which he has given.

Turning attention from this part of our subject, let us contemplate that which may be regarded as the cause of the resurrection of our bodies—the resurrection of Christ. *Such a person, as the Lord Jesus Christ lived and was*

crucified, in the land of Judea. We may close the Bible and prove this. The avowed enemies of religion testify to this. Hear their testimony. Tacitus, the celebrated Roman historian, who flourished under the emperor Trajan, says, in his Annals of the Christians, who were so cruelly persecuted by Nero, that "Christ was their author, who, in the reign of Tiberius, was punished with death, as a criminal, by the procurator, Pontius Pilate." The younger Pliny, Governor of Bythia, in his celebrated letter to Trajan, says, "That Jesus was worshipped by his followers, as God. They sing among themselves, alternately, a hymn to Christ, as God." Lampridius, Celsus, Porphyry, and the emperor Julian, all of them avowed enemies to Christ and his religion, bear testimony to the fact, that such a personage lived, was a great teacher, performed miracles, and was crucified at Jerusalem. Pilate, in conformity to a prevailing usage among the governors of Roman provinces, kept an account of the remarkable transactions during his procuratorship. In one of these memoirs, called "*Acta Pilata*," transmitted to Tiberius, was contained an account of the life and death of Jesus Christ. That Emperor proposed to the Senate of Rome, that he should be numbered among their gods. The Senate refused, alleging, that Tiberius had refused the honor of deification himself.

Josephus says: "There was, about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as believe the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was (the) Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first, did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day.

as the divine prophets had foretold these, and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."

These authorities, taken from among the enemies of Christ, prove that he lived during the reign of Tiberius Cæsar; that he was remarkable for the purity of his life; that he was a great teacher; and that he was put to death under Pontius Pilate, at Jerusalem. Some of these historians say he performed miracles; others speak of his incarnation; and one of them says he was seen alive on the third day after his death.

These historical declarations prepare us for listening to what the disciples and followers of Christ say of his rising from the dead on the third day. The wrath of man praises God.

The observance of the Christian Sabbath, is evidence of the resurrection of Christ.

The Jewish Sabbath was a standing memorial, that God created the world in six days, and rested the seventh. The observance of the Paschal Feast, among the Jews, was evidence that God, in Egypt, passed by the blood-marked houses of the children of Israel, and that he, in the person of the destroying angel, slew the first born of Egypt. When the Jews, from age to age, ate the Paschal Lamb, in memory of their departure from Egypt, there were many who would have exposed the imposition, had such an occurrence never taken place. Joshua, passing with Israel over Jordan, dry-shod, commanded that twelve stones, from the bottom of that river, should be taken and reared into a monument, commemorative of the remarkable miracle. To future ages this monument stood, as evidence of the passage of Israel over the sacred river.

The Bunker Hill monument, stands a witness of a great battle, which was fought on that spot during the revolution. The monument in Baltimore, perpetuates the fame of Washington. Had such a man as Washington never lived, or such a battle as the one at Bunker Hill never been fought, those monuments would stand a reproach to those who erected them.

The observance of the Christian Sabbath, from the time that Christ appeared to the disciples in the room, with closed doors, in Jerusalem, to the present day, has constituted a standing memorial of his resurrection. The Jewish Sabbath was commemorative of the first creation; the Christian is of the second creation, or the work of redemption, which is a great moral creation. The early Christians observed the first day of the week, in memory of Christ's resurrection. Had Christ not arisen from the dead, the observance of this day would have brought on them ridicule and contempt. The imposture would have been exposed by Judaizing teachers and disaffected disciples.

The Sabbath is a divine institution. None can prosper and oppose it. Like the stone in the Gospel, it crushes, and grinds to powder, all who treat it with contempt. Like the Apocalyptic beasts, fire proceeds out of its nostrils, and devours all its adversaries. They that attempt to violate it, meet the fate of those who dared to offer strange incense on the altar of God; or a worse fate than Jeroboam, whose hand withered when stretched out against the man of God.

Revolutionary France stands forth on the page of history, a fearful and bloody example of a nation, that dared to trample under foot that divine institution which commemorates the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The prophecies uttered by Jesus Christ, properly considered, furnish additional evidence of the fact, that he came forth, on the third day, from under the dominion of the grave. Indeed, the predictions uttered by all the prophets, concerning Christ's resurrection, should be regarded in this light; but especially those spoken by the Saviour himself. In the text he speaks of his rising on the third day. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, (says Christ,) except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." When the Son of man uttered these prophecies, he either knew that he would arise from the dead, or that he would not arise. If he knew that he would not arise from the dead, why did he voluntarily submit to be arrested, to be condemned, and put to death? He could have avoided being arrested. He could, by praying to the Father, have procured more than twelve legions of angels to deliver him from the hands of his enemies. But he did neither. He knew that he would arise from the dead, therefore, he voluntarily submitted to be arrested, tried, condemned, and put to death. These several points, taken together, produce evidence, which cannot fail to be felt by every mind. It is in combination that their force is felt. The stream, issuing from the base of the mountain, flows on till another empties into it, swelling its size; another and another flows into it, swelling its volume; others flow in, until a large, majestic, and resistless river is seen. So it is with a train of evidence. One stream flows into another; others, and still others flow in, until a current of evidence, of force and potency, is produced, sufficient to sweep before it all doubt and unbelief. This, applied to the evidence in favor of Christ's resurrection, cannot fail to discover to our minds its force and power.

The friends and enemies of Jesus Christ both agree, as to the fact, that about eighteen hundred years ago, such a person as Christ lived in the land of Judea. They agree that he was a remarkable teacher, noted for his exemplary life; that he was put to death on the cross. They agree that his friends took his body from the cross, and laid it in a new sepulchre in a garden near to Calvary. This done, they rolled a great stone to the mouth of the grave. The Jews then succeeded in getting the stone sealed. It was probably fastened with cords; and these, brought to a knot, had sealing-wax impressed on it, and on this was stamped the governor's seal. Then from Pilate they procured a Roman guard, and placed it over the grave to watch it. Thus far the friends and enemies of Christ agree. The friends of Christ say, that, on the third day, the body was missing. The enemies of Christ say, that it was stolen.

Let us examine both of these accounts. First, the assertion of Christ's enemies. They say that, while they slept, his disciples, by night, stole away his body. This assertion was neither probable nor possible.

Could a few timid fishermen, without friends, without arms, come and attack an armed guard of sixty soldiers, and, by force, take away the body of Jesus? These dispirited disciples, the most courageous of whom had trembled at the threatening voice of a servant girl, were not in any point of view, the men to defy Pilate, the sanhedrim, and the guard. It was at the full moon, and Jerusalem was filled to overflowing with the tribes in attendance at the Feast of the Passover. A theft seems impossible. Nor was it probable, if the disciples had made the effort, that they could have succeeded.

The soldiers say, while they were asleep the body was stolen! How strange! It was at the peril of their lives

for Roman soldiers to sleep on guard. They were relieved every three hours. Why should they, in so short a time, become sleepy? It were not probable that all, if a part, were asleep. But admit that they were asleep. Take their own word. Admit they were sound asleep. Who would believe a witness testifying in court to an event which occurred whilst he was asleep? If they were asleep, how did they know whether the body of Jesus was stolen, whether he arose, or what became of him? But they were not asleep; they were all awake, and witnessed the power of the resurrection.

It has been alleged, that Christ, after his resurrection, was seen by none but his friends. This is not true. The first appearance of Christ was before his enemies, on rising. An angel descends from Heaven; earth trembles at his foot-tread: in the might of his strength, despite bars, seals, and locks, he rolls back the stone from the mouth of the grave. The keepers did quake, and became as dead men. Their spears, ungrasped, lay useless by their sides. Jesus arose! The first rising glories of the resurrection were seen by Christ's powerless enemies.

Let us now hear what the friends of Christ say, concerning the disappearance of the body on the third morning. They affirm, soon after, that he was seen alive. The testimony of a witness, in court, depends more on his general character for truth than on the strength of his affirmations. What is the character of those who testify that Christ arose from the dead?

They were not credulous. When news first came that Christ had been seen by a company of women, they treated it as an idle tale. Thomas—not being present when he appeared to the apostles—said, he would not believe unless he could put his hands in the prints of the nails. These are not the feelings of over-credulous men.

Moreover, they had all been disappointed in their expectations concerning the nature of Christ's kingdom; they looked for a temporal kingdom. In this they were sadly disappointed. Under this disappointment, had there been an attempt to practice a fraud on them, surely it would have been detected. Men act from motives, in all things. Where were the motives for these men to deceive? What did they gain by it? Honor? They were accounted the offscouring of the earth. The friendship of the great? They were despised by the great, the wise, the learned. Did they win ease and affluence? They were persecuted by Jew, Greek, and Roman. They "wandered about in sheep skins, and goat skins, dwelling in dens and caves of the earth." They were actuated but by one motive, in preaching Christ and the resurrection—the hope of a reward in Heaven. Had they deceived, that deception, in their view, would have excluded them from the only reward which they looked for.

If they were good men, from principle, they would not deceive. If they were bad men, they had no motives to deceive. They were not deceived themselves. They saw Christ, after his resurrection, under different circumstances, at different times, and at different places. They ate, walked, and talked with him. He was seen, sometimes, by one, then by the twelve, and once by five hundred brethren. They were not deceived. These are the witnesses which tell us that Jesus arose from the dead.

We are now prepared to hear from them the different occasions on which their Divine Master appeared to them.

As it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and a company of women, to the

sepulchre. This was without the city, near Calvary, in a garden. They had their spices prepared, to annoint the body: this, though, had been done before, at Bethany, by Mary. The women, filled with sadness, came to the sepulchre. They found the stone rolled away, and an angel, with a countenance like lightning, sitting on it. "Come see the place where Jesus lay; he is not here, but has arisen," said the angel. Mary Magdalene hastened and told the eleven. John and Peter ran to the sepulchre, found it empty, and departed filled with wonder. Mary Magdalene returned to the sepulchre: there she stood, weeping bitterly. On turning, she saw one whom she supposed to be the gardener, and to him she said: "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him." Jesus saith unto Mary, "Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended to my Father."

The other women who had accompanied Mary, returning from the sepulchre, and who were not present at this first appearance, met Jesus. This was the second time he was seen. They came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. The time intervening between these two instances of Christ's appearing to his disciples could not be long; yet we find he tells Mary Magdalene not to touch him, because he had not ascended to his Father; but when he appears to the company of women, he suffers them to touch him. May we, or may we not, infer from this, that Christ, during this interval, ascended to the Father, made his appearance there, and then returned to this world?

Soon after this, probably whilst he lingered on his way from the sepulchre to the city, Christ appeared to Peter. No one was present during this interview. Great was the love of Christ in thus appearing to Peter, who had so basely denied him! On the same day, on their way to

Emmaus, were two disciples. Probably they were returning to their homes, in Galilee, having forsaken the cause of Christ. As they were walking in sadness, and were talking of what had recently occurred, Jesus, in disguise, comes up with them. He inquires the cause of their sorrow. They tell him, wondering that he had not heard of it. Then he expounded to them the scriptures, showing that Christ must needs suffer and rise again. At their request, he turns into Emmaus with them, breaks bread, opens their eyes—and behold, before them is the object of all their solicitude! Then he vanished out of their sight. “Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way,” they exclaimed, and rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem. They had scarce entered the door where the eleven were, before the exclamation is heard, “The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon!” They instantly relate how Jesus had appeared to them in the way, and in the breaking of bread. This is scarce uttered, before the whole house is in consternation; they supposed they had seen a spirit. “Peace be unto you,” was his mild salutation. “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.” It was too much! They could not believe for joy. He ate, and conversed with them. Thomas was absent at this interview. When told of it, he protested that, unless he could put his fingers in the print of the nails, he would not believe. Eight days after this, the disciples were assembled in the same room. Evidence this for the observance of the Christian Sabbath. Thomas was present. Jesus appears in the midst. Thomas is not upbraided, but is first addressed by the Saviour. At the request of Jesus, he put his fingers on the prints of the nails. It is enough. “My Lord and my God!” was his exclamation.

After this, Jesus showed himself to his disciples at the sea of Tiberius. One is almost ready to fear that they had turned away from the cause of Christ, and had returned to their old trade. By a miracle, Christ showed them, that they would be successful in preaching the Gospel, and then gave them to understand that preaching, and not fishing, was to be their future business.

Christ had a special meeting with his disciples, by appointment, on a mountain in Galilee. Here, doubtless, he made out to them full instructions relative to the kingdom of heaven, and the spread of the Gospel. In such sequestered localities, Christ transacted most of the important business relative to his great mission. After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; the greatest number by whom he was seen at one time. Then he was seen of James; probably at some important period. And lastly, he was seen by the eleven, on Mount Olivet. Here he took his leave of them, to be seen no more on earth till he comes to judge the world. Here are eleven times at which he was seen. Not in a corner, one by one, or during the darkness of night, was he seen; but by many, and in the most public manner, did he appear. In Jerusalem and in Galilee, to one, to the eleven, and to five hundred; on the mountain top, and by the sea shore, by the way, and in the room where the Apostles assembled, did he appear. There could be no possibility of deception. The times and places at which he appeared, and the circumstances connected with these appearances, make fraud impossible; so that we may exclaim, in the language of the disciples, "The Lord is risen indeed!"

Let us pause a moment, and contemplate the stupendous miracle of Christ's resurrection. Having seen the doubts of the disciples dissipated, we are prepared, with strong

and vigorous faith, to behold the magnificent sight. The body of Jesus, lifeless, pale, and cold, was taken down from the cross, wrapped in the winding sheet, and laid in the cold rocky sepulchre. A great stone was rolled to the mouth of it, to make it sure; upon this was placed the governor's seal, and a guard of Roman soldiers over the grave. Three days and nights did the Son of God lie under the power of death; twice did the sun go down on his grave; twice, at midnight, did the spears of the soldiers glitter in the moonbeams over his tomb; twice did the stars, the night sentinels of the sky, look down upon the holy sepulchre, and weep tears of essential light; the rude war songs of the soldiers, all night long, rang in triumph over the sleeping body of the Saviour!

This was the hour of the triumph of the powers of darkness. Hell grew darker, dilating with malicious triumph. Devils exulted, in prospect of man's ruin. Pilate, the sanhedrim, and the priests, thought the *disturber* was in their own power. Death, rearing his throne of skulls over the grave of the Son of God, waved his black sceptre in triumph. He called upon worms and corruption to come and assist in devouring the mighty captive. They responded, "We come not; for his soul will not be left in hell, neither shall his body see corruption."

Deep was the despondency of the disciples; dark and gloomy their prospects. They suppose that all is lost. They had forsaken all for Christ. They had trusted, that he was the one who should redeem Israel; but he has been crucified. In the cold grave, watched by soldiers, he sleeps in death. All, all, they suppose is lost! Often when men expect least, they receive most. Go, my soul, take thy stand over the grave of the crucified Saviour; look upon *him* who lies there in death. Will he live again? Will he come forth from the power of the

grave? If he rise not, thy hopes are all gone. If he live not again, thou—Oh! my soul—wilt remain in death for ever. There lie in that grave, thy hopes for life and immortality.

Scarce had the third morning faintly dawned—scarce had light tinged the portals of the east—scarce had the first melodious strain of the morning bird been warbled forth, ere the Son of God, a mighty conqueror, arose in triumph. Bursting the bars of death and the fetters of the grave, up he rose, a glorious conqueror. He snatched from death his black sceptre and shivered it in a thousand pieces over the cross, and then bound the monster death in chains to his triumphal chariot wheels. Angels sit around to witness his triumph; the soldiers quake, and become as dead men; in glory and majesty the mighty conqueror triumphs, openly, over death, the grave, and the powers of darkness. He ascends to the right hand of the Father. “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in,” he exclaims. Who is the King of glory? “The Lord, strong and mighty; the Lord, mighty in battle.” I, that have conquered death, and have him a captive in chains; I, that have redeemed the human family, I am the Lord of glory. “Lift up your heads, O ye gates,” shout a million of angelic voices, in full chorus; “even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in!” The risen Saviour enters, while all heaven is vocal with redemption strains. He proceeds to the right hand of the Father; and he that was made a little lower than the angels is crowned with glory and honor.

Ours is a living, risen, interceding Saviour. He even liveth to make intercessions. How encouraging this is to the Christian. In affliction, in the dark hour of adversity,

Christ, at the right hand of the Father, lives to make intercession for his people. In the trying hour of temptation he remembers, before his Father, all his followers. With their names engraven on the palms of his hands—those hands pierced by the nails—he presents them to the view of his Father, and entreats in their behalf. Even the thoughtless, careless sinner, he remembers. Whilst the unconverted are refusing submission to him, blaspheming his name, and despising their worship, he intercedes for them, saying, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.”

Christ arose from the dead. Then will our bodies arise from the dead. Consoling news! It falls upon the ear, like dew upon Mount Hermon; it falls upon the spirit, like oil on Aaron's head. Now can we lay our friends in the cold grave, for they shall come forth. Now we can submit to death. Jesus died, that we might live. We shall but sleep in death, till Christ comes to take us to himself.

As Jacob, when he heard that Joseph lived in Egypt, said that he would go and see him before he died, so may every Christian, with confidence, say of their Josephs and Benjamins, that they yet live; they live in a land of plenty and abundance, and I will go and see them. To die, then, is to live again. It is to live with Jesus, with angels, and with departed friends and relatives.

The resurrection, applied to those who die in sin, will be inverted in its power; instead of the greatest blessing, it will be the greatest curse. It will be the fitting the soul and body, in horrid union, for unutterable anguish and woe. The soul of the impenitent, after death, till the judgment, will be in a state of suffering. The body will lie in the grave. When the judgment trumpet shall have sounded, the soul, like a guilty thing started on a fearful

summons, will come forth from the prison house of woe. Convulsed with anguish, swelled with rage, and weeping tears of blood, it will return to earth, and seek the spot of earth where the body was interred. Hovering over the grave, I can, methinks, hear it say, "Come forth, thou filthy cell of my former iniquity; come forth, thou hated, detested companion of my former guilt; we have sinned together, we have violated God's commands together—come forth, and partake of my suffering and punishment!" Lo! the grave rends. Wide open does it cleave. Up rises the body. It responds to the soul, "Hail, my old companion! I know thee well. I hate, I detest, I abhor thee. Thou horrid, guilty thing, why comest thou hither? But I know thy errand. It is but meet. We sinned together; we should be tormented together. Come, let us unite in perpetual and jarring discord. We lived on earth in sin and rebellion; it is but proper that we should together be punished, in that dismal world where punishment knows no end."

Soul and body unite. Capacitated to the highest tension of suffering, both are driven away, where hope never comes. This is the resurrection of the wicked. "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

SERMON XIII.

ELEMENTS OF A CHURCH'S PROSPERITY.

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“O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.”—Psalm cxviii. 25.

Few cities present a greater variety of character, than the one in which we live. Here may be seen, men of almost every clime—of every habit—of every religion, and of no religion—all commingled in the various callings of life. The grand moving power, which appears to propel all, is the attainment of riches. Every thing is to be regarded as secondary to this. Even the most pious have persuaded themselves, that, to aim at worldly prosperity, is to aspire to greater degrees of holiness. Such suppose “they are verily doing God’s service,” when all their powers are engrossed in the business of acquiring wealth. No man, who understands what he is doing, comes to the great city for ease, or for the sake of getting rid of care. The object is like that expressed by James: “I will go into such a city, and buy and sell, and get gain.” There can be no doubt, but the great thing that brings a city’s population together, and that binds them together, is the hope of amassing riches. Such a state of things affects all classes. Scarcely any stand so

remote from the scene of busy activity, as not to feel the impulse, and catch the spirit. All eagerly rush into the contest—all hope to gain a prize of greater or less value.

There are, however, special periods in the history of commercial and mechanical pursuits, when the mind, in spite of itself, throws itself into the future, and forecasts the probabilities of success. Such a time is the present. The busy season has opened fully upon us. It has brought with it, its usual cares, temptations, and responsibilities. Many of you, after an absence of several months, have returned to your several callings, and resumed, with your wonted energy, the toils and hardships of trade. And the question which now presses itself on the mind, is, "What are my prospects of success?—Shall I gain the end before me?—Shall I prosper?" How many, in this assembly, have had, within the last few weeks, such thoughts as these; and, in regard to your worldly affairs, have practically said, "O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity." There is nothing sinful in such reflections as these, when properly subordinated to the still higher concerns of eternity. But, in attempting to calculate the prospects of success in your worldly interests, have you, at the same time, had a still greater anxiety for the attainment of spiritual prosperity? Insuperable, indeed, must be that man's religion, who can be incessantly directing his energies to the attainment of the perishable, while comparatively neglectful of the imperishable.

Dear Brethren,—I submit, to-day, a proposition, in which you all profess a deep concern: Shall the Church, of which we are members, and to which we cherish an undying attachment, attain to an increased prosperity? Are we prepared now, that, after a long

absence, we have assembled in God's sanctuary, to press the petition, "O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity?"

Many of you have labored, long and faithfully, for the enlargement of Zion. You have seen this Church established in troublesome times. From circumstances, to which it may not be safe for me here to allude, and over which it would be well to throw the mantle of forgetfulness, you were essentially excluded from the sympathy and co-operation of those, who, under other circumstances, might have afforded you a liberal aid. Those were days of darkness and despondency in the history of our denomination in this city. With tearful solicitude you watched over the movements of Providence, as you were directed onward in the path of duty. "God was indeed with you; and you, too, were with him." From an obscure and unsightly room, did your prayers, as incense, ascend to the Eternal Throne. Many an hour of conscious approval of God—many a season of spiritual rejoicing, was witnessed in that place, whose external deformity repelled the gaze of the multitude. Your assemblies were small, but the manifestations of Divine regard made those assemblies cheerful and joyous. My Brethren, although those may have been days of weakness, they were days of gladness. You would not have those seasons obliterated from your memory, or taken from your experience.

But the clouds, which then hung the firmament with blackness, have been swept away, and the sunshine of prosperity has, at last, dawned upon us. With a comparatively large and vigorous Church, surrounded by the walls of God's sanctuary—with the Bible unfolded before us—with a respectable share of public sympathy and patronage—we would here raise our

Ebenezer, and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." Taking courage from the past, and, with aspirations for a greater measure of God's goodness we would renew our petition; "*O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.*" We need still greater efficiency—greater strength—a warmer zeal—a more vigorous piety—in a word, we still need greater prosperity. Follow me, then, with your prayers, while I shall attempt to lay before you, some of the elements of a Church's prosperity.

First. *A pious and enlightened ministry.*

Such is the economy of Christ's kingdom, that the institution of the Christian ministry is intimately associated with its prosperity. So closely interwoven is it, into the very existence of the Church, that, where the voice of the preacher has long been hushed, the praises of Zion have died away, and the glory of the Church has departed. When and where has religion prospered, in the absence of a faithful ministry? On what shore, or in what clime, or in what society, has the message of Redeeming Love been effectually published, without its agency? Where have sinners been reclaimed, and the Church enlarged, independent of its influence? Where is the promise, that the Holy Spirit will exercise his life-giving power, separated from it? Other means of grace are of vast importance, and their energy felt in the onward march of God's spiritual Israel; but the ministry, through the arrangement of the Great Head of the Church, is the centre, around which they all revolve, and to which they are all subordinate. We have only to appeal to the history of many of our own Churches, for striking illustrations of this truth. How many congregations, once flourishing and vigorous, from which the agency of

a faithful pastor has long since been withdrawn, now present scarce a trace, to remind a stranger, that God's praises were once celebrated, his truth fearlessly proclaimed, and his saints rejoicing in his presence. The candlestick has either been entirely removed, or its light so eclipsed, as to emit but a faint and flickering ray. The prosperity, if not the existence of the Church, has been totally destroyed!

But the ministry which God approves, and that which is essential to the prosperity of a Church, is a *devoted* ministry. No greater curse can befall a Church, than a prayerless and ungodly ministry. There is nothing which can atone for deficiency in morals and piety, in the minister of Christ. How can he successfully inveigh against sin, when he himself has not seen and felt its evil? How can he discourse of repentance, when himself a stranger to contrition? How can he guide the trembling steps of an inquirer to the hill of Calvary, when he himself has never sought shelter under its bleeding victim? How can he urge to a thorough consecration of life, while there is such a wonderful discrepancy in his own? How can he unfold the map of the celestial world, and point out the mansions of blessedness, when he himself has no hope of heaven? My Brethren, such a man is as the sign-board, which points the way, but takes no step itself. By the power of his eloquence, he may enchain and fascinate the admiring crowd—he may talk loudly of the sparkling gems and golden harps of the ransomed above; yet, wanting in piety, all his imposing gifts and performances become “as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal;” and, with all the finish and elegance, resemble only the life-like, but lifeless beauty of a corpse, “laid out in state, and decorated with the pomp of death.”

The prosperity of the early Churches, was owing much to the intense piety and glowing zeal of their ministry. They triumphed in every place. Every false religion fell lifeless before the power of the doctrines which they preached. The heathen shrine was demolished—the oracle was abandoned, and the banner of the Cross raised in triumph on every shore; and one essential secret of their might was a holy life. The Apostle might have inveighed against sin in every city of Greece, for a century in vain, had not his appeal been accompanied by a vigorous and manly piety. And the same relation exists now between the prosperity of a Church and a devoted ministry, as existed when first the ascending Saviour delivered his parting precept.

Yet not only a pious, but an intelligent ministry, is an important element of a Church's prosperity. The next greatest calamity that can befall a Church to an ungodly, is an ignorant ministry. Those whom the founder of our religion selected as its first champions were men of high attainments. It is a libel upon the Apostolic ministry to speak of them as ignorant and uneducated. True, when first they were called from the net, their minds were but thinly stored with that learning, which was then and ever has been a high qualification in the Christian minister. They were, however, at first, even when associated with the fishermen on the lakes of Galilee, devoting their energies to a secular calling, men of strong native intellect; and all they needed was time for study and development. Christ made his selection among the illiterate to show, that he needed not the adornment and artifices of a polished oratory, to propagate his faith, and push forward the triumphs of the Gospel. But after he had thus gathered his disciples from the humble and obscure walks of life, how did he act? Were they at once introduced into

society as his ministers? Did they at once rush into the forum, or place of public resort, to discuss the claims of religion? No, no! The Great Teacher kept them close at his side. They listened to his sublime lectures; they witnessed his astonishing miracles; and they were taught the true lessons of an heavenly oratory. Three years were they thus in the school of Christ—sometimes on the mountain height—sometimes on the sea shore—sometimes in the thronged city—sometimes in the chamber of the sick and the dying; were they in the presence of him, who “spake as never man spake.” Their minds were stored with every necessary truth to illustrate and establish that system of salvation, which was the theme of their ministry. No class of ministers have ever entered upon the duties of active life with better disciplined heads and hearts, than those who pursued a course of three years study with the Son of God, and fully graduated on the day of Pentecost. Let us have such facilities now, and there is not a seminary in the land that would not at once be deserted, and the Great Teacher thronged with young aspirants for glory and immortality.

The ministry of the Reformation too, was a learned ministry. Those daring spirits that battled with the man of sin, and brushed away the rubbish which had so long obscured the purity and lustre of the Christian faith, drank deep into the fountain of theological learning. No other men were suited to the emergency. Men of like discipline are needed now—men with their armor fully on, burnished bright, and flaming in the light of heaven. The day has gone by, when the great majority of our Churches will be satisfied with an incompetent ministry. In almost every State, our communicants are waking up to the importance of ministerial education, and devising means to afford the best facilities to those entering upon the responsible calling

of the Christian ministry ; thus supplying us with a good illustration of the thoughts we have been pressing, *that a pious and enlightened ministry is a prominent element of a Church's prosperity.*

Secondly. *An enlarged spirit of benevolence.*

I use the term benevolence, here, in its widest and most unrestricted sense. The system of Christianity is a system of benevolence ; it emanated from God's benevolence, and its means and ends are alike benevolent. As a Church drinks into the same spirit, may she ever be prosperous and effective. One reason why the glory of many of our Churches is so often obscured, is, because of their prevailing selfishness. "They seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." They seem to act as if their cause and his were two, opposite, irreconcilable things ; or, as if they had never heard of the name, or grace, or claims, of Jesus, they may be seen pursuing their aims as steadily, and wasting their substance as selfishly, as the world around them. No burning desire for the salvation of souls inflame their breasts. No holy zeal animates them to deeds of mercy to the perishing. They have no higher aim than the attainment of worldly ease and prosperity. Can such a communion be pronounced prosperous ? Is she fulfilling the end of her organization ? A true Church of Christ is pre-eminently a missionary Church. She is not merely to maintain an existence—sustain a large and fashionable congregation, and liberally support her ministry ; but, to be prosperous, she must be executing the high commission, with which, in common with the entire community of believers, she has been entrusted by the Redeemer of men. The order given to her, and which she must obey or prove recreant to her Saviour, is, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to

every creature." To feel an irrepressible anxiety for the salvation of a lost and ruined world, is her design, her characteristic vocation.

Now we maintain, that this subject is intimately connected with the prosperity of our Churches; that where the doctrine of missions is repudiated, there is a poor, sickly, and inefficient communion. Look abroad, and where are those Churches and Associations, once large and flourishing, but which denounced the work of sending the Gospel to the destitute, as a work of man's devising, and withheld their aid—where are they? In many places, so far extinct, that there are not members sufficient to keep up an anniversary. I tell you, my brethren, that if a Church would consult her own good, and look to her own prosperity, she must see to it, that she is faithfully executing the trust committed to her. The bread of life, for a famishing world, has been placed within her hands, and she can but break and dispense it. She has been appointed a trustee for the world—an executor of a Saviour, who has bequeathed happiness to men—and guardian of the most sacred rights in the universe.

I learn clearly from the Scriptures, that the spirit of Christianity is a missionary spirit. I am not to consider myself as sent into the world merely to get wealth and enjoy myself. I am the servant of Christ, and must do my Master's work. I am bought with a price, and am not my own. I must yield myself up to my Divine proprietor. I am a soldier, and I am put in requisition by him to whom I belong. I am called out to service. The trumpet bids me take my station round the standard, and join my comrades in arms, to fight the battles of my Lord. The world is in rebellion and hostility against Christ, and I must take the field and labor to bring it into subjection to

him. I am but one; but then, I am one. I cannot do much, but then I can do something; and all I can do, I ought, and, by divine grace, will do.

“Christians, view the day
Of retribution! Think how ye will hear
From your Redeemer's lips, the fearful words,
‘Thy brother, perishing in his own blood,
Thou sawest. Thy brother hungered, was athirst,
Was naked,—and thou sawest it. He was sick,
Thou didst withhold the healing; was in prison
To vice and ignorance—nor did'st thou send
To set him free.’ Oh! ere that hour of doom,
Whence there is no reprieve, brethren, awake
From this dark dream.

“The time of hope
And of probation, speeds on rapid wings,
Swift and returnless. What thou hast to do,
Do with thy might. Haste, lift aloud thy voice,
And publish to the borders of the pit
The Resurrection. Then, when the ransomed come
With gladness unto Zion, thou shalt joy
To hear the valleys and the hills break forth
Before them into singing; thou shalt join
The raptured strain, exulting that the Lord
Jehovah, God omnipotent, doth reign
Over all the earth.”

Thirdly. *Union among the members of the Church.*

In his ever-memorable farewell address to his beloved countrymen, Washington said, “United we stand, divided we fall.” This is equally true in a Church. A greater than Washington has said, “A house divided against itself cannot stand.” “If ye bite and devour one another,” says the Apostle Paul, “take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.” Such has been the experience of Churches in all ages. What an affecting exhibition of human weakness, has been given to the world, in those unnecessary and virulent controversies which have been conducted among the professed followers of

Christ! When we see members of the same Church arrayed against each other; when we see coldness and distrust, where there should exist the warmest affection and Christian confidence, it requires no extraordinary sagacity to foresee the end. It were just as impossible for such a Church to prosper, as for our republic, when involved in anarchy and civil war. Religion is a unit, and God designs that those who profess it, should show forth that unity in their respective organizations.

This characteristic of religion is strikingly set forth under the former economy. When the hosts of Israel, under the special guidance of Jehovah, were pressing on toward the land of Canaan, there was but one tabernacle—one pillar of cloud by day, and pillar of fire by night. And when they had, in triumph, crossed the waters of Jordan, and were in full possession of the promised inheritance, there was but one holy city—there was but one temple, in which was deposited the ark of God's precious covenants; there was but one altar—one shekinah—one holy, and one most holy place. All was one. And when Christ came to earth, it was to throw down "the middle wall of partition," that there might be "one fold and one shepherd." And the standard around which the apostles rallied, and which they so successfully upreared in every land, bore out the inscription, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." The early ministers understood well the lesson, that this oneness of interest and affection among the members of the Church universal, in general, and every individual Church, in particular, was essential to the prosperity of Christ's cause. Hence, on the first development of a dissension, or controversy, the strongest measures were used to suppress it. The Epistles are burdened with exhortations to be united.

In the valley of Vision, it was not only necessary, that life should be infused into each part separately, but all must be brought together, with a view to a full and perfect organization of the whole; and then, all that was wanting, was a skilful leader, to conduct them on to conquest. So it is not only fit, that the principle of spiritual life should be implanted in the heart of each one of us separately, but we must be so harmoniously arranged and organized, that, under the guidance of the Great Captain of Salvation, we shall have nothing to do, but to proceed to victory. When it was demanded of Agesilaus why Lacedæmon had no walls, it was quickly answered, "The concord of its citizens is its strength." How true is this of a Church of Christ. The concord of its members is its strength. While the Church goes forth in the strength of the Lord Jehovah, her great reliance is upon the united action of her members.

"If it be possible, then, my brethren, live peaceably with all men." "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body." "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but, in lowliness of mind, each esteeming others better than himself." No sacrifice is too great, that can secure and promote the Church's harmony. One Diotrephes may destroy the peace of a Church. It is a melancholy fact, that some men must be first, or they will do nothing. They will rule or rage; and, the misfortune is, they rage if they rule. May God ever preserve this Church from such men!

Fourthly. *The enforcement of a judicious and Scriptural discipline.*

When a person leaves the ranks of the wicked, and unites himself with the people of God, he relinquishes the gaieties and frivolities of worldly society, and proclaims

his adherence to the Saviour of sinners. He voluntarily comes under the restraints of the Church, and professes to be governed by the laws of Christ. No government will receive into its military service, any who will not heartily abandon the ranks of the enemy, and fully acknowledge the supremacy of its rightful sovereign. So, when we enroll ourselves as soldiers of the Cross, we must swear eternal enmity to every foe, and fearlessly breast the fury of the enemy. The hosts of God's spiritual Israel, are still engaged in conflict. The hour of victory has not yet arrived. The sections of the vast Christian army, true to their place, must move steadily on, resolved "to conquer or to die." To be successful in this contest, the most accurate and rigid discipline must be maintained. We have to contend with forces who understand well their ground, and how to take advantage of their position. We have to do "with principalities, and powers, and wickedness, in high places." Every man must be true to his post. One false recruit may confuse our forces, and, for a time, retard our progress. See the Israelites on their way to the promised land. They pass, in triumph, the waters of the Red Sea. They have escaped the destructive power of the enemy. Every thing appears bright and clear before them. They imagine, that soon they will be in quiet possession of the promised rest. But suddenly their course is checked. *No advance can be made.* The camp is filled with despondency and gloom. What is the cause of the consternation? What enemy has invaded their ranks? A diligent search is at once made, and the cause is found to lie within themselves. One of their number has proved recreant to his trust, and no advance can be made, till Achan is expelled from the camp. Here, then, we see, that the sin of one man kept thousands from marching on to their destined home.

The prospects of that people were overhung with blackness, till the offender was removed. So with the Church of Christ. If the world can but see the Church sustaining those whose morals are impure, and piety doubtful, their victory is nearly won. How can that society be prosperous, which retains within its communion those whose feelings are at variance with each other; who are sometimes seen at the theatre, the dance, and frequently mingling in the various rounds of sinful pleasure. In vain are appeals made from the pulpit, and sinners entreated to become reconciled to God. "Give us," say they, "proof that you yourselves believe, and are in earnest." But why need I speak of this? Every true Church acknowledges the indispensableness of discipline, as an element of her prosperity. But, my brethren, while this is admitted in theory, it is wretchedly overlooked in practice. And when it is observed, it is attended to, by a greatly disproportioned sensibility. A man, who, perchance, visits a party of pleasure, is arraigned before his Church: while another, whose bosom is rankling with the passion of avarice, and contributing comparatively nothing to the cause of Christ, retains a high and honorable standing. Another, who is found in the dance, is censured, and may be expelled: while another, who fearlessly and shamelessly tramples upon the institution of the sacred Sabbath, and is found on the steamboat, in the stage-coach, or in the rail-car, on God's holy day, is, perhaps, even an officer in the Church. Thus, we see, there is, oftentimes, the grossest inconsistency in the very enforcement of discipline. The weightier matters of the law are totally overlooked; crimes, which, if generally practised, would annihilate religion, and destroy even our civil institutions. Now, what we contend for, as an element of prosperity, is, a discipline proportioned to

the magnitude of the offence. Let the dance, fraud, covetousness, the violation of the Sabbath, and every breach of Christian morals, receive its due share of censure and condemnation. Till this is done, no permanent prosperity can be enjoyed.

Fifthly. *An efficient management of its financial interests.*

Every association formed for good and valuable ends, requires money. Most organizations require a stipulated amount to secure admission, and then impose a regular taxation to meet their current demands. The Church, however, makes no such absolute call. She exacts no initiation fee. And, because no such stipulated demand is made, but little obligation is felt. Now, in worldly associations, no pretensions of surrender to God are given: Christianity forms no part or parcel of their compact; they organize themselves into a body, for comparatively selfish purposes; they profess to feel no special concern for any, except members of their own brotherhood. But, it is far different with the organization of a Christian Church. The members of such a Church, profess to the world an entire consecration of themselves to the Lord, in an everlasting covenant: like the giving up of a victim for sacrifice, under the Levitical law—nothing was withheld—all was surrendered. So, by the mercies of God, we profess to have offered ourselves, as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to him, as our reasonable service. What, my brethren, does such an offering include? In the primitive Church, all felt they had given *themselves* to the Lord. It is reasonable to suppose, that, when a man of such pretensions offers himself to the Church, that he designs doing all in his power, with his money, example, and influence, for the advancement of Zion. He will do this, or falsify his

implied promises. And here we have the ground for Church discipline, in the case of such members as refuse to sustain their proportionate part of the pecuniary burden of the Church. A man should be excluded for an absolute refusal of this sort, with as much unanimity and promptness, as if he had committed a gross immorality. Both are a palpable violation of the law of Christ, both will bring disgrace and ruin upon the Church, and each should call for immediate excommunication, if persisted in.

I have only to appeal to your own experience and observation to attest the truth of what I am saying. How many shameful Church meetings have you witnessed at different places, growing out of the finances of the Church? How much wrangling and animosity, because of the refusal of members to pay their proportionate amount? In our Churches, perhaps, more strife has been engendered, because of a slovenly management of their financial interests, than from any other one cause. Here is a Church, that through a judicious committee, reckon their current expenses at a given sum. An effort is at once made to raise the proposed amount. A few members appreciate their privileges and obligations, and nobly act their part. The balance, enjoying just as many privileges, and under just as many obligations as they, look carelessly on, and withhold their aid. Here is another Church, that adopt a different system of meeting their pecuniary obligations. An assessment is made upon the pews—an opportunity is extended to families to secure seats, where they may sit quietly together in the worship of God. Numbers are taken—both by communicants and others—while many look coldly on, and oppose the measure, as inconsistent with the spirit and genius of the Gospel. Unfortunately, with few exceptions, such opposition comes

from quarters, not remarkable for liberality, according to any system. Now, how is a Church long to prosper under circumstances like these? What must be the feelings engendered? What confidence can be reasonably reposed in the moral integrity and piety of such delinquents? Are they entitled to Christian sympathy? Do they not virtually falsify their most sacred vows, and as such forfeit our esteem? The fact is, a Church retaining many such in her communion, has not many years to live, until the inscription may appropriately be enstamped upon the walls of her sanctuary, "*Her glory is departed.*" Happy, indeed, is that Church, whose financial affairs are so conducted, as to be borne willingly and impartially.

Sixthly. *A proper sense of our individual responsibilities.*

One serious obstruction, which opposes the onward march of the Church, is, that the individual is lost in the mass. We oftentimes talk about the Church, as if it were some ideal organization of which we formed no part. The coldness of the Church, the remissness of the Church; are topics of frequent remark, by Church members, when they do not once think of their being constituent members of that Church. They would not thus speak slightly and disparagingly of their own families, because they feel their own individual relationship. Now, what we need is to realize our individuality. When struggling for salvation, we understood and felt this. The question we then pressed, with all the earnestness of a soul conscious of guilt, was, "Lord, what wilt thou have *me* to do?" "What must *I* do to be saved?" "Lord, save, or *I* perish!" We then felt our personal danger, and lost sight of the multitude, in our struggle for salvation. We should love the Church, and feel for it, by honorably acting *our* part. The great inquiry of us all individually should be, "What is *my* state?" "What am *I* doing?" "What

progress am *I* making?" It is an easy thing to talk about the Church, but altogether a different matter to realize our individual relation to the Church. Whenever a Church becomes distracted, the question of each one to himself, in the presence of God, should be, "What have *I* done to interrupt the harmony of God's people? If I have had no agency in it, what can *I* do to effect a union?" When a Church becomes cold, and Zion languishes, the question of each should be, "Is *my* heart right in God's sight?" "Am *I* living in the honest and conscientious discharge of private and public duties?" Do *I* feel an intense anxiety for the eternal salvation of souls, now dead in sin?" "Am *I* earnestly and perseveringly praying for God's power and glory to be displayed in the sanctuary?"

Now, it is to be known and recollected, that, what is the business or vocation of the Church, is the business or vocation of every one of its members. "In the movements and action of the body, there is the movement and action of each limb, organ, and sense, and all animated by the one vitalizing, guiding, and impulsive soul; and each contributes its measure of service in accomplishing whatever is achieved." There was no more and no other obligation, resting on the conscience of the Apostle Paul, viewed merely as a Christian, than rests now upon the conscience of each *member* of the Church. If you ask, then, by whom the high destiny of the Church is to be fulfilled? the answer comes directly back—*by you*. You—each one of you, constitutes the Church, at least, in part; and in part, the Church's business lies with you. Let us, then, never lose sight of our individuality, remembering, that "*every one must give an account of himself to God.*"

Seventhly. *A practical exemplification of religion in all the relations of life.*

This would seem to include all that we have said; yet we wish to insist more fully upon this, as a distinct element of a Church's prosperity. It has been well said, "Every Church is intended to be a light of the world, not only by its creed, but by its conduct. Holiness is light, as well as truth; creeds, confessions, and articles, except as they are sustained by their practical influence in the fruits of righteousness, do little good; they may be as the flame which is to illumine a dark world, but the misconduct of those, by whom they are professed, so beclouds the glass of the lamp, with smoke and impurity, that no light comes forth, and the lamp itself is unsightly and offensive. To receive or retain unholy persons, as members of our Churches, is a fearful corruption of the Church of Christ, which was ever intended to be a congregation of faithful men—a communion of saints."

Christianity is pre-eminently practical. It is not only to be seen in the great congregation, but it must go with us, beyond the enclosure of God's sanctuary, into all the departments of active life. It tells us "whatever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, think on these things, and practice them." Travellers tell us, that the Chinese set up the object of their worship, not only in their temples, but in their shops. If, then, the nations, that have never been enlightened by revealed religion, acknowledge the presence of their divinities, not only in their religious, but secular callings; how much more should we acknowledge the authority of God in all the circumstances and relations of life. If the Church would be honored and esteemed, her members must carry their religion with them into all the transactions of worldly business. It must control us in all sales, bargains, and contracts: it must forbid all falsehood, fraud, and artifice; all selfishness and grinding extortion, and thus impress

those with whom we are associated, with the loftiness of our principles, and the purity of our intentions. Religion does not consist merely of prayers, sermons, and sentiments; but of supreme love to God, and subordinate love to man, running out into all the endless varieties of application and operation, of which these sacred affections are susceptible.

Now, unfortunately, for the Church of Christ, many of its members have no other idea of religion than the performance of devotional exercises, or the indulgence of devotional feelings; forgetting, that a good temper, the payment of debts, the fulfilment of contracts, the forgiveness of injuries, the duties of home, are as truly a part of religion as the observance of the Sabbath, or the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Like the blood of our corporeal system, which does not confine itself to two or three large arterial ducts, but which diffuses itself through a thousand different channels—warming, vitalizing and pouring the tide of life into innumerable vessels, many of them almost too minute to be seen. My brethren, this is the religion the world expects of us, and will not be satisfied with anything short of it. This is the religion which honors the Church, and secures her full prosperity. This is an argument in proof of the purifying influence of the Gospel, which no stratagem or sophistry of infidelity can overthrow. Now, I repeat, this is what the world looks for. *They* demand of us, that we carry our religion into everything, whether *we* meet the demand or not. Do they reproach us with inconsistency only when we neglect private or public prayer? No. What do they know or care about such matters? But when professors are passionate, revengeful, and malicious; when they are shuffling, artful, and fraudulent; when they are slippery, treacherous, and evasive; when they are unkind,

unamiable, and oppressive; then it is that they tauntingly exclaim, "*Is this your religion?*" The Church of the Redeemer is dishonored, and the Saviour left bleeding in the house of his friends, with a fresh crucifixion. O may we aspire to that perfect symmetry of character, which carries conviction to all around, that "we are honest in the sacred cause;" that character in which religion is seen, giving devotion and zeal to the Christian; affection to the husband; justice and truth to the tradesman; patriotism and loyalty to the citizen; fondness to the father; gentleness to the neighbor; kindness to the master; and charity to all. Such a character will shed a holy radiance on all around, and constrain the world to acknowledge the glory and efficacy of religion. O that our Churches were composed of such members; then speedily would roll on that happy period, when heaven and earth shall unite in swelling the triumphant chorus, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!"

Thus have I endeavored, my brethren, to set before you some of the elements of a Church's prosperity. Other points, of perhaps equal force with those named, might have been pressed; but, it is feared, that your patience may already be exhausted. I cannot close this subject, however, without urging on your attention one or two thoughts which grow out of the subject discussed.

1. We learn, from what has been presented, that *numerous accessions to our Churches do not necessarily increase their prosperity.*

To the sincere and zealous Christian, it is always a cause of devout rejoicing, to witness the power of divine grace, in subduing the hearts of the impenitent, and bringing them into cordial subjection to the Gospel of Christ. We delight to see the feast of the Saviour thronged with willing guests. But such is the deceitfulness of sin

and the treachery of the human heart, that a desire to see our own particular Church increased, so as to stand forth, a strong and successful rival with other Churches, is oftentimes mistaken for a real solicitude for the salvation of souls. Our sectarian predilections are, at times, so overpowering, as to create within us a morbid sensibility and false zeal for the enlargement of our Churches. Numbers are thus hastily brought in, whose hearts and heads have never been sufficiently disciplined by the Spirit and truth of God, to qualify them for the sacred and responsible duties of Church members. The moral power of the Church, instead of being increased, is essentially diminished. My brethren, I have only to refer to the want of efficiency in many of our Churches, in support of what I am saying. How vastly disproportionate is the increase of moral power, in our Churches, to their numerical increase! How many pious ministers could be permanently and adequately sustained; how large would be the monied appropriations to our various benevolent institutions, were any thing like the effort used to increase the moral, as the numerical strength of our Churches.

2. A Church, embodying in her communion the elements of which I have spoken, will command the esteem of community.

My brethren! why is it, that, in so many of our cities and large towns, our Churches are so depressed, and call forth so little sympathy and respect of community? I know it is often attributed to the opposition of other Churches, and, not unfrequently, of society, to our denominational peculiarities. This is, certainly, a very quick and summary method of solving the question. And then the convenience of this arrangement is, that no correction is requisite. But is it true? I answer,

unhesitatingly, No. Our sentiments, in themselves, are adapted to call forth the respect of community, as effectually, as those of any other people. The great difficulty, in these places, is, that our Churches do not respect themselves. But let them be supplied with a competent ministry; let them possess, at all times, an enlarged spirit of benevolence; be united; manage, with efficiency, their financial interests; realize their personal obligations; and carry their religion into all the various transactions of life; and our Churches will be as highly esteemed, and as commanding in their influence on society, as those of any other order.

It has been eloquently said, "Let our Churches appear in that sublime majesty, that heavenly glory, that spotless purity, and that effective beneficence, which it is her prerogative to put on. Let them be only seen, as a seraph from the skies, pure, united, benevolent, consistent, an image of God; and then, though they may be too holy for the carnal heart to love, they will still command respect and admiration. Men will not turn from them with disgust and aversion, as from a spirit of falsehood and mischief; they will not insult and despise them; but will consider it as a species of profanity to treat them with rudeness and scorn. It is the feeble, distorted, and crippled form, in which many of our Churches have too generally appeared; the worldliness of their spirit, so strangely contrasted with the heavenliness of their profession; the loftiness of their pretensions, with the lowliness of their practice, which has oftentimes brought upon them the scorn and indignation of community." Let a Church fulfil her high obligations, and God will compel men to do her homage. He will bring her foes to her feet, and make them feel how she is honored of God, and how "awful goodness is."

3. *Are we willing to labor and pray for the prosperity of Zion?*

Remember, that after all our efforts, God is our strength. From him, are we to derive those sacred influences, without which our Church must languish and die. This truth is recognized in our text, "O Lord, I beseech *thee*, send now prosperity." Our Zion—the particular Church to which we belong, through our remissness, may fall under the just indignation of a righteous God. The candlestick may be removed. Local Churches, because of their unfaithfulness, have been displaced. Where now are those Christian societies, to which the Apostles inscribed their epistles? Where is the Corinthian Church, so affectionately addressed, and yet so boldly reprov'd, by the great Apostle of the Gentiles? Where is the Philippian Church? where the Collossian? where the Thessalonian? the letters to which prove how cordially Christianity had been embraced, and how vigorously it once flourished, among them? Where are the "seven Churches of Asia," respecting which, we are assured, that they were once strenuous in piety, and gave promise of permanence in—Christian profession and privilege? Where now are these Churches? How true it is, that God, in his righteous displeasure, caused the light of his countenance to be withdrawn—countries, where once the light of Christianity shone forth, in its richest effulgence—cities, where once, the Gospel exerted its life-giving power—lands on which prophets delivered their sublime predictions—and where priests made atonement—from these, has every vestige of pure religion been obliterated, and the Cross been supplanted by the Crescent. My brethren: could we read the history of these Churches, we should find that they left their first love, grew lukewarm in religion, became involved in

angry controversy, false doctrines superseded the true—the great purposes for which they were organized, lost sight of, till God, in his wrath, gave forth the sentence, “Let the candlestick be removed out of his place.” God grant that no such appalling calamity shall ever befall this Church! O let us, with increased energy, labor for the permanent prosperity of Christ’s cause and the salvation of souls!

But while the prosperity of a particular Church may be interrupted, and the Church itself displaced; yet, the Church universal shall stand for ever. No influence in the universe shall overthrow it. Hear, O Zion! the word of the Lord, and rejoice in his salvation. “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee, in judgment, shalt thou condemn.” “The Lord thy God, in the midst of thee, is mighty. He shall be a wall of fire round about thee, and the glory in the midst of thee.” The Church is safe, though nothing else may be. Let infidelity utter its blasphemies, and false philosophy its sophistries, and popery its anathemas, yet the Church will remain a standing proof of the Saviour’s declaration, “Upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Let no man’s heart tremble; let no man’s spirit fail him; let no man’s brow gather despondency. The vessel has indeed been launched; the waves dash over her; the tempest rages high; the storm gathers on every side; but she rides, majestically on towards the port of her eternal destiny. My brethren, Christ Jesus is at the helm, and the vessel can never be lost, unless the pilot perish. “Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself, a glorious Church, not having spot or

wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

"Clothed with the sun and in her train the moon,
And on her head a coronet of stars,
And girding round her waist, with heavenly grace,
The bow of mercy bright, and in her hand
Immanuel's cross, her sceptre and her hope."

SERMON XIV.

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

BY REV. MILTON BIRD

Editor of the Theological Medium, and Watchman and Evangelist.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”—Rom. i. 16.

WHERE the unseen world was no subject of concernment, riches, pomp, and glory, the alone object of admiration—the height of genius and learning, united with the greatest profligacy of conduct; where such is the temper and tone of the community, it would not be strange, if a religion, which demands severe self-denial, teaches that the world of sense is vanity and vexation of spirit, and appeals to the fears and hopes of the invisible world, to stir the fountain of thought, and touch the springs of action in the soul, should meet with the scowling brow and curling lip of contempt, instead of the willing mind and open heart to receive it.

But, be this as it might, Paul says, “I shall not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, even at Rome.” This sentiment leads him into the great theme of his preaching to the Romans—*salvation alone to be obtained by faith in Jesus Christ.*

The gospel of Christ claims our attention:—

First. It is a revelation from God to man.

Secondly. As the law was designed to secure the highest happiness, without sin; so the gospel is fitted to accomplish this design, after the introduction of sin.

Thirdly. The sinner is instated in eternal felicity by faith, which is the alone condition of salvation.

Fourthly. We ought to believe the gospel without shame, and boldly maintain our profession of it.

First. The gospel is a revelation from God to man.

The idea of God lies at the root of the gospel. The design of the gospel is, to unfold the true God to man, acting according to the principles of his nature, and with the regard due to his character, his law, and government. The gospel reveals the medium, through which God's real disposition towards sin is seen in such a way, as to demonstrate, that the exercise of pardon, and the grant of forgiveness, are in consistency with the dignity of government, and the authority of law. The gospel shows the only way, by which men may escape the curse of the law. It lays the foundation of hope, for all who have just views of the divine law, and the moral state of man. Blot it out, and we are lost for ever. Not a single ray from any other scheme will dart through the gloom of our prison-house, to cheer us, to disenthral from our chains, and enlighten our path to freedom, to holiness, and glory. To change the imagery, we are left like an unpiloted ship, driven by the winds over the pathless ocean. Aside from the gospel, not one star of hope appears. The doctrine of atonement gives to the gospel scheme its chief superiority, and distinguishes it from all others. The manner in which the atonement is explained, or conceived, gives a peculiar complexion to all the doctrines of the gospel. Christ is the great Sun of righteousness, in the centre of the system in which "life and immortality are brought to light," and the light of the knowledge of the glory of God bursts

forth, and shines through the wastes of death, and discovers man restored from ruin, rejoicing in life, and dressed in the robes of immortality.

Unassisted by the gospel, men, from the foundation of the world, have been stupid idolaters. The light of nature, or, what is called natural religion, wholly fails in the knowledge of those things most essential to man. Though in the stupendous and splendid fabric of the universe, God has hung out the ensigns of his wisdom and power; yet, he has not here exhibited those perfections which it is most essential for fallen man to know. The pale and feeble rays of nature's light, afford no sufficient knowledge to guide mankind to happiness. In respect to what is the nature of sin and holiness? the nature of acceptable worship? the certainty of a future state of rewards for the righteous, and punishments for the wicked? Is God merciful, can he consistently pardon sin, will he actually do it, on any conditions? The religion of nature cannot respond. The light of nature is darkness visible. Atheism is a universal blank. It is a dark sea of oblivion. The utmost researches of the ancient philosophers, respecting the Supreme Being, demonstrated that "the world, by wisdom, knew not God." To their researches, the deists of modern times have added nothing valuable, except what they have derived from the gospel, which they profess to reject. They being ignorant, as all must necessarily be, of the moral perfections of God, while destitute of revelation, they can ascertain no immutable law of conduct for rational creatures, nor can they exhibit any definite motives to the practice of virtue. Hence, pure deism, as to the high end of man's existence, has very little advantage over atheism; perhaps it has none; for, though it admits a God, it cannot tell what he is; it cannot explain his nature; of course, it cannot be much superior to that scheme which

admits no God, and, therefore, cannot explain any thing. The truth is, none but God could know his own perfections and designs, and none but he could disclose them. There is sufficient evidence to evince, to an unprejudiced mind, the necessity and propriety of a supernatural revelation. The gospel is such a revelation ; it supplies the deficiency of the law of nature, and presents knowledge, and a mode of instruction adapted to the state and capacity of our race.

Secondly. As the law was designed to secure the highest happiness, without sin ; so the gospel is fitted to accomplish this design, after the introduction of sin.

The objects of our knowledge are God, nature, and man. We derive our knowledge of God, especially of what are called his moral perfections, from divine revelation. God alone can know and comprehend his own determinations ; and none but he can reveal them. In our knowledge of nature and man, we must be guided wholly by facts, by observation, and experience. In nature, we see what God does ; in revelation, why he does it. Reason is the proper instrument of truth. Nature is an external display of God. It is a system of living laws, flowing from God ; and, in their endless variety of combinations and results, producing all possible effects, except those which are peculiar to Almighty Power. The whole of visible nature is comprised in matter and motion. These have their origin in one common principle ; and that principle is power. This originates, modifies, preserves, perfects, and dissolves, every portion of temporary nature. The visible universe is a theatre of effects, which proceed from adequate causes. The study of nature is the best preparation for the reception of revelation.

It is worthy of remark, that designing wisdom is nowhere more legible, than in the wonderful adjustment of

man's interior construction to his exterior condition. God exhibits, in his constitution, an epitome of the universe. He is allied to matter by his corporeal frame; to the whole vegetable and animal world, by his animated organization; to God, and all intelligent beings, by his moral and intellectual powers. On the one hand, he ranks with the highest angel that burns before the throne of God; and, on the other, with the meanest worm that crawls on the earth. He was placed in the temple of nature as the priest and the monarch.

God could govern man by force. But he would cease to be a moral, accountable creature. Law, then, is essential to moral government. The government which God exercises over his rational creatures, is not a government of force, but of law. Nothing, therefore, can take place under the government, that is contrary to, or inconsistent with, the real meaning and authority of law. The obedience required of the subjects, is urged by the promise of reward to the performer, and the threatening of punishment to the transgressor.

The law is a delineation of perfect rectitude, and was designed to govern the whole man, by inspiring right motives, and producing an entire correspondence between them and external actions. Love is the fulfilling of the law. All real and acceptable obedience flows from pure love to God. Any action, therefore, either mental or external, which does not proceed from this fountain, comes under the denomination of disobedience, or sin. If man be not a moral agent, if he have not ability to obey, it does not appear that he can be capable of disobedience. As the principle of obedience is love to God, so that of disobedience is alienation from him. Love is conscious of God as its highest object, and all other beings in their relation to him; and it becomes the

creative principle of a life of piety and virtue. In alienation, there is consciousness of self-seeking, which gives *self* the place of God; and it becomes the principle of a life of impiety and vice, in all their modifications.

Sin is atheism. It denies God. It strikes at his law, government, and character, and, consequently, at all good, and all happiness. Sin originates not in God's will, not in any deficiency in his government, but in voluntary deviation from his law. Sin is a reality. It is a fact of human experience. In his consciousness of guilt, depravity, and misery, man attributes sin to himself as its cause; and he is, therefore, conscious of a condemnatory sentence of the law, asserting the loss of God's favor, and exposure to punishment. The law is a part of human consciousness, and is revealed to all men, as a law proceeding, not from the arbitrary, but the reasonable will of God, and implying a self-revelation of God to his moral creatures. "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do, by nature, the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another." Romans ii. 14, 15.

As a transgression of law, sin is moral evil; and, as a want of conformity of inner principle to law, it is moral evil. It is to the domain of the will that sin belongs, and it is existing opposition to moral law. It originates in the abuse of free-will, and is essentially irrational. Right choice is subordinated to the law. The omnipotence of God supplies the conditions of right choice. Moral agency begins with moral liberty, which includes the capacity of wrong choice. The power of an accountable creature, given by God to man, was intended for good,

but was capable of being perverted to evil. Thus, in the limited independent self-organization of the creature, the possible existence of sin is conceivable. Its actual existence can only arise out of the abuse of that power. Sin is neither founded in the dualistic principle, nor in the will of God. It can exist only on the supposition of good as primitive. Good is eternal; evil is not. Right is older than wrong. Truth is older than error. God is light, and in him is no darkness. That sin exists, is no argument either against the goodness, power, or wisdom of God. His wisdom did not contrive and design it; his power did not create it; because his goodness could not prompt him to choose it. Nothing stronger can be urged, than that God permitted it, *not* that he fore-ordained it, as some argue.

Sin is not a defect of being, but an alienation of being from God. This doctrine is consistent with the facts of moral consciousness. Sin is not a mere privation of good, resting on the necessary difference between the Creator and all creatures, as Leibnitz contended. His supposition issues, in the horrid consequence of making God the author of sin, and would diffuse it as widely, and continue it as long as created existence. Spinoza inculcated the principle, that virtue lies in being, in power, in quality of existence. This principle, if we mistake not, is echoed in Goethe and Carlyle. In the metaphysical fog of the doctrine of philosophical necessity, Augustine, Calvin, and Edwards, lost the path of sound doctrine, which preserves the antithesis between sin and holiness. By the Scriptural part of their creed, and the depth of their piety, they escaped the evil consequences of the false philosophy which they advocated. Sin, we repeat, is not a pitiable ignorance of man's highest good; it is a wilful choice of known error. A perversion, not a defect of being.

Sin is not the offspring of sense. Not a mal-adjustment of the component parts of our nature to each other, but a perverted relation of our whole nature to God. It lies not in our lower or animal nature, with its susceptibilities and desires. The impulses of sense are only the occasion, not the cause of sin. Why does the will improperly yield to sense? Not from the pleasure of the lower impulse; for the pleasure of the higher ought to overrule it. If the will is not its own law, it must be owing, either to a chosen perversion, or to an inherent weakness of the will. If the former, the theory of sense must be abandoned. If the latter, it runs into fatality, or the iron chain of motive and action, stretching from the beginning to the end of our empirical existence. This view cuts up the gospel doctrine of atonement and salvation, as also the doctrine of a judgment, by the roots, and gives them a phantom-like character.

The theory which assumes that sin was needful, and must exist as a contrast to holiness, that it might be known and developed, was admitted by the Pantheism of the East, and the hyper-predestination of the West. It represents God as sacrificing one part of his offspring, to increase the happiness of the rest, and to display his own glory. It introduces sin into the world, as one of the infinite series of steps necessary to lead to the glory of God, and to secure the happiness of a part of his creatures. In this theory, sin is pre-supposed to account for its own existence. It assumes, that sin gives life and energy to holiness, and sends forth the destroying angel as the messenger of salvation. That love is soporific and insipid, without an infusion of the acid of malice to give it sweetness, is quite a mistake. The influence of holiness is independent of that of sin. Truth is not dependent on error for its influence. Deity borrows none of his glory

from the devil. Contrast, in its purest form, may exist without sin. The human body is not strengthened by fever. To diet on poison, does not increase the vital power of the healthy man. The experience of violent antagonism, is not needful to produce happiness. The law of love is utterly inconsistent with the necessity of sin. It betrays, certainly, a singular poverty of conception, to picture sin as needful, where love reigns, and lays open all hearts to each other. An attempt to measure all possible systems by one's actual experience, is a great error. Good can exist without evil, and contrast without contrariety. In his government of the world, God does not doom some to sin, that others might reach the climax of holiness, and that he might glorify himself. The doctrine which teaches that he does this, ends in Pantheism and stern necessity, and nullifies the gospel. It is in conflict with the moral intuition of the human mind, and the showing of the Bible on the subject. Sin is both a state and act of insubordination to the law, emanating from the Supreme Will. It has no foundation in that will; but is founded on free-will in the creature, and admits of no theoretical deduction from the sovereign will of God.

Sin is the state, or act, of a will opposed to the will of God. He could not choose it, unless he does it without a will, or act against his will, and actually sin himself. Such a supposition would un-deify Him: it would land in atheism.

Being, in its essence, love, the law of the moral world tends, in its own nature, to secure holiness in all reasonable or accountable creatures. Sin has no foundation in it. If all comply with its requirements; if all love God with all the heart, and their neighbor as themselves, there is no place left for sin or misery. These have their origin in a

deviation from the divine law. This deviation, and the law, cannot originate in the same will. Therefore, the root of sin can neither be traced to the will, above law, nor to that always conformed to law; but to the will, transgressing the law. It denies God, strikes at his government and character, and, consequently, at all happiness.

We learn what God designs and means, by what he does, as well as by what he says. Anterior to creation, nothing exterior to God existed. The reason, then, why any thing was created, must be sought for in the Creator. That reason must lie in his own choice and pleasure, and not to the thing to be created. God was under no necessity to create; if he was, that necessity must have been eternal; and this would lead to the same reason for the existence of things, as for the existence of God. God, as he is eternal, involves, in his own nature, the cause of his existence: "I am that I am." Not so with any thing created. The highest excellency is God himself. If so, then, in the highest benevolence, he must have a supreme regard to himself. It is inconsistent for infinite wisdom and goodness, to prefer an inferior to a superior object. In all his works, God acts with a supreme regard to his own glory. More happiness is secured by a display of his infinite excellence, than could be by any thing else. Creation has added nothing to the actual sum of holiness and happiness; for these, wherever found, are only streams from the eternal, exhaustless fountain. In creation and providence, God designed to diffuse and communicate, in different forms, that infinite fullness which dwelt in himself. Sin did not, and cannot, dwell there. It is antagonistic to his purpose. It was not the object of his choice. God chose to give existence to intelligent agents, whose capacity to receive holiness and happiness.

involved the liability of perversion, in the exercise of free-will. He did not need sin, as a means to execute his great design in creation. But, foreseeing it would actually exist, he determined to overrule it, that it should not rob him of his glory, nor man of happiness, unless he chose obstinately to continue in sin; and thus oppose the gospel, as well as the law, and bring upon himself endless misery. As before remarked, the law tends to secure the highest happiness, without sin, and the gospel to secure it after the introduction of sin.

We have endeavored to arrive at a correct view of sin, that we may rightly apprehend the propriety, necessity, and nature of the atonement. If the physician knows the nature and character of the disease, he can the more readily make up his judgment of the nature and character of the remedy.

Sin involves man in *guilt, depravity, and misery*. To save him from misery, his guilt and depravity must be removed. Righteousness and holiness are necessary to salvation. The former to legalize it, and the latter to qualify for its enjoyment.

The Gospel has immediate respect to the law of God, the moral state of man, the ultimate and chief end of God, in creation. The transgressor cannot tear himself from God's government. His guilty conscience links his spirit to the law, and the Eternal throne. His doom is as absolute under the government of God, as the original demand of the law itself. The law condemns, but cannot save the guilty. Under the law, the condition of justification is unsinning obedience. As fallen, man cannot fulfil this condition. By his own exertions merely, he can neither remove guilt, nor destroy the reigning power of sin. The tendency of guilt, in itself, is to increase, not diminish. There is no recuperative

tendency in moral depravity, in itself it waxes worse and worse.

Here look at the government which God administers over his rational creatures. It is such as has been brought into operation by infinite wisdom, which must discern and choose the best; by infinite goodness, which must prompt to the best; and by infinite power, which can execute the best. It is, unquestionably, the best possible. It is not a government of force, but of law. Nothing arbitrary or inconsistent with the real import and authority of law, can take place under this government. If God governed by force, creatures would cease to be moral or accountable. Moral agents are under the administration of moral law. In a good and well balanced government, the legislative and executive parts of it must coincide.

Sinners cannot be forgiven, without something to fulfil the real meaning of the law, and to support government. We cannot conceive a greater absurdity, than the supposition, that God can govern the moral world by law, without carrying it into execution. Where guilt is contracted, there must be punishment, or its substitute; it cannot be cancelled without a substitute for it. To pardon guilt without securing the end of punishment, is to give up government, to repeal and annul law. To say that God can govern his rational creatures without punishment, is the same thing as to assert, that he can govern them without law. But law is essential to government, and penalty is equally essential to law. A law which has no penalty, or, which is the same, a law that is not executed, ceases to be a law. It loses all its force, and is not even respected as mere advice. Reward is promised to the performer of the law's requirement; punishment is threatened to the transgressor. On the one

hand, we behold the Great Legislator, promulging his law, and enforcing it with penal sanction; on the other, the whole system of rational beings, receiving that law as an unalterable rule of righteousness. Man commits sin. He incurs the penalty, for the execution of which God's justice and truth are pledged. If God, instead of punishing, pardons and saves from the penalty, where is his justice? Where is his truth? Where is the regard due to his law, his character, and government? If he punish, where is his mercy? Where is his goodness? These difficulties make a gordian knot in theology. We would not, by violence, cut it asunder; but let the gospel fairly untie it.

Man, as fallen, cannot be saved on the ground of his own perfect obedience. If he undertake to endure the penalty of the law, then farewell to all hopes of salvation. God is just and merciful. If he punish, his justice harmonizes with mercy. If he pardon, his mercy harmonizes with justice. Justice and mercy harmonize in man's salvation. They harmonize also, in the sinner's damnation. These attributes are exercised without infringing on each other. Our God is "a just God and a Saviour." "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." 1 John i. 9. He is just to himself, to his law, to the universe. The justification of the sinner is so far from being contrary to the law and justice, that it is witnessed by the law and justice. The atonement is a substitute for the execution of the law on the transgressor. It not only answers all the ends of punishment, but many more. As the execution of the legal penalty was necessary without the atonement, so atonement without such execution was equally necessary. The obedience and sufferings of Christ demonstrate, that God no more gives up the penalty of the law, than if he should inflict it on the original transgressor. The

righteousness or justice of God is manifested through Christ, "that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Rom. iii. 26. As it is written, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Rom. x. 4. The end of the law is as fully answered in the salvation of men by Christ, as it would have been if they had never transgressed, but had obtained life by perfect obedience. The atonement had its origin in God's love; it adds nothing to that love to his creatures; but was necessary to its consistent exercise and display. Atonement does not imply a purchase of God's mercy: it is a medium, through which God's real disposition towards sin should be seen in such a way, that the exercise of forgiveness should not interfere with the honor of government and the authority of law. The gospel teaches the doctrine of full atonement, but holds up the salvation of the sinner as an act of pure grace.

In the gospel scheme of salvation, justice and grace are united, but not blended. The provinces of both are entirely separate. They are opposite in their nature. Justice demands; grace gives. If the preceding view of the necessity and nature of the atonement be correct; the atonement and forgiveness of sin have no respect to that denomination of justice, which "consists in an equal exchange of benefits."

In regard to that which respects personal character only, and consists in bestowing just rewards, or inflicting just punishments; salvation is an act of perfect grace. The obedience and sufferings of Christ did not satisfy this denomination of justice.

With respect to justice, in the sense which comprises all moral goodness, and properly means the rectitude of God, by which all his actions are guided, and which forbids that any thing should take place in his government

that would tarnish his glory, or subvert the authority of his law; salvation is an act of perfect justice; for the atonement satisfied justice. The obedience and sufferings of Christ rendered it right and fit, with respect to God's character, government, and law, and the good of the universe, to remit sin. The doctrine of full atonement for sin, and salvation by grace, are perfectly consistent. The atonement makes the salvation of sinners consistent, or possible. It is just as sufficient for the salvation of all men, as of an individual; and it is no more sufficient for one sinner, than for every one. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth. The gospel scheme originated in God's love; it was contrived by his wisdom; and executed by the energy of his Omnipotence: it is his power to save: it is the mighty plan by which power goes forth to save, and by which all the obstacles to man's salvation are taken away.

Thirdly. The sinner is instated in eternal felicity, by faith, which is the alone condition of salvation.

On this important principle final salvation is suspended. The gospel provision depended wholly on the sovereign will and determination of God. Its acceptance depends upon the will and determination of man. That the provision of the atonement is broader than its application, is a fact to be traced to man's will, not God's. He willeth not the death of any. To such as perish in their impenitence, he says: "I would, but ye would not." In choosing the gospel plan, and laying the foundation of pardon and justification for all men, God is sovereign. In the acceptance, or rejection of that pardon and justification, man is free. And in the fact, that his agency is the turning

hinge of his destiny, God displays the highest exercise of sovereignty. In working all things after the counsel of his own will, it is his pleasure to make faith the condition of man's deliverance from sin. On this condition salvation is conferred through the gospel. Every one that believeth is saved. This is the way in which God exerts his power in the salvation of men. By faith in the love of Christ revealed in the gospel, the power of God becomes ours; the voice of Christ speaks; it is the voice of free grace, calling lost sinners to come unto him. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out:" the condition, under which the promise is given by him, is, that you believe in him, and believe his word. He assures you, that if you will do so, you will obey the gospel. Before Him, who cannot be mocked, every man stands or falls, is saved or lost. Saved by faith; lost by unbelief.

Under the law, man was invested with the power to determine whether he would obey or disobey. So he is under the gospel. He has the power of choosing life or death, of believing, or not believing. This is as plainly taught in the Bible as any other doctrine. It lies at the foundation of morality and accountability. It is a fact of consciousness. If man has not the power to exercise faith, in whose choice does that power lie? God's or the Devil's? If the former, then all will be saved; for God has no pleasure in the death of any. If the latter, all will be damned; because the Devil's pleasure is to destroy. But some are saved. Others die in their sins. We therefore conclude, that, under God, man's final destiny hinges on his own choice. If this is not the case, we can discern no rational grounds for the feeling of moral obligation, and the distinction between regret and remorse. We can discover no essential distinction between matter and spirit. If the acts of man's will are pre-determined

by a cause out of his will, according to the law of cause and effect, which controls the changes in the physical world, then the notion of a power in the will to act freely would be the merest figment. But that man is free to believe, or not believe, is a doctrine solid and true; it is stamped with the seal of conscience, and countersigned by reason. It is a cardinal principle of the gospel. We believe in the possible appropriation of salvation by faith, because the gospel renders faith itself possible.

It has been shown already, that the obstacles from the law, the government, the character, and attributes of God, are taken out of the way, by the life, sufferings, death, resurrection, and intercession of Christ. Salvation is provided for our lost race. The impediment from the corruption of our nature is rendered no longer insurmountable, by the aid and awakening of the Holy Spirit?

The atonement was made for every man; but, without the Holy Spirit, not one will be saved. The great provision of the atonement depended wholly upon the Supreme will of God, and exists in actual fact. Its acceptance is potential, and exists only in possibility, till it becomes a fact of consciousness or experience to the sinner, by faith in Christ.

Faith does not destroy the law; it establishes it. The gospel reveals a legal plea of right, the meritorious ground of salvation to every one that believeth: first declared to the Jew, then to the Gentile.

Each economy requires the making out a condition. Under the legal, the great aim was, to work up the requisite condition, so as to obtain the reward on the principle of the law. Under the gospel economy, the great aim is, to rise to the necessary condition of faith, so as to obtain the reward of obedience, on the principle of

the gospel. Christ's justifying righteousness becomes ours upon our believing. The atonement legalizes salvation to every one that believeth. Faith is the turning point of destiny. It is the condition of salvation; but not the meritorious cause, for salvation is an unmerited favor. It is a highly important principle. He that repudiates it, either in the kingdom of nature, or that of grace, must inevitably perish. The child is told that water will drown it, the fire destroy it, and poison kill it. If it believes neither parents nor guardians, but makes the experiment, to know whether these things are so, or not; it must perish in the very experiment. By faith in its teacher, the child learns its a, b, c; and the student advances in literature and science. The patient has faith in his physician; and the client in his advocate. In the kingdom of grace, man must have faith in the Saviour of the world, or die in his sins. There is no merit in faith, it receives the merit of another; but there is demerit in unbelief: the former is instrumental in salvation, the latter is the procuring cause of damnation, which lies alone in the neglect of salvation; not in being passed by, and left out of its provision; not in the sin of Adam; not in being left under the law, by a *preference of Omnipotence*, which placed others under the dispensation of the gospel. This is a plain doctrine of the gospel. "*For it (the gospel) is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth.*" The Apostle teaches us to look through the system, and see in it a mighty plan, which provides for the complete and everlasting salvation of all men; which actually saves all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. In this plan, God's power goes forth to save; it is his power for the attainment of salvation. The condition on which salvation is conferred, through the gospel, is expressed, "To every one that believeth." All men could be saved, if they

would accept salvation on God's terms : but some will not do it ; and, therefore, perish in their sins. The agency of each produces his own ruin. But, in salvation, there are two agents and one instrument—God and man ; the gospel, or truth.

The provisional work is God's. The receptive act is man's. Without faith, there is no deliverance from the guilt and corruption of sin. In providing salvation, God did what he was under no obligation to do. The provision, therefore, depends upon the *free* and *sovereign* will of God alone. In that will, the condition of acceptance has its foundation. Also the right of bestowment. But, under God, the acceptance depends upon the sinner's will. The provision of the atonement, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the truth, are indispensable to the exercise of man's agency, in accepting the provision. His ability to accept, is given by the influence of the Holy Spirit, and the instrumentality of truth. The basis of the atonement is in God's will. Its provision is general, and exists in actual fact. The acceptance of it relates to man's will, and is potential ; it exists in possibility, and becomes actual "to every one that believeth." Justification, by faith in Christ, accomplishes the design of the law. For he "is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth."

None are excluded from salvation, who do not exclude themselves. The reason why the application of the atonement is not as broad as the provision, is to be found in the will of man, not in the will of God. His Son came into the world, that the world, through Him, *might be saved*. The Holy Spirit has come to reprove the world of sin. The record of truth is given. The Church exists, the light of the world, and the salt of the earth. God employs the individual members of his Church, and the living ministry, to bring truth in contact with the sinner's

understanding and conscience. The Holy Spirit makes it penetrate his thoughts and feelings, and points him to Christ, the way of salvation, the truth and the life; that he may behold Christ, as set forth in the gospel, and live, as did the serpent-bitten Israelite, who looked upon the brazen serpent, lifted up, by Moses, in the wilderness: he experienced healing virtue in looking; so does the sinner, in turning his mind's eye to Christ. If the Israelite perished, he was the cause of his own death. If the sinner is lost, he destroys himself. Faith is the turning point. It is the hinge of destiny. All the mighty interests of eternity hang upon it.

The power which determines the sinner's final destiny, either lies in the will of God, or the Devil, or the will of man. If it lies alone in the will of God, then all will be saved; for he has no pleasure in the death of any. If in the choice of Satan, then none will be saved; for he seeks to destroy all. But some are saved, and others lost. We, therefore, conclude, that the agency of man is the turning point of his final destiny. To those perishing in their sins, he says, "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." John v. 40. The sinner has both a conviction and a consciousness of his unwillingness to believe in Christ. His wrong choice implies the ability of right choice. The great Teacher does not use *will not* for *cannot*. He does not proclaim, that "all men have *natural ability* to repent and believe the gospel," and then whisper, "It was never decreed, however, that this ability should result in repentance and faith, in the case of one sinner; none have *moral ability*, indispensable to faith, and it is only given to such individuals as God preferred, or elected, to salvation." If *moral ability* is indispensable, and we hold that it is, then, what is termed *natural ability*, is insufficient, it is no ability: and, to hold it up as actual

ability, is to use WILL NOT for CANNOT. The doctrine of Christ does not take the turning point of destiny out of the sinner's agency. Unwillingness implies the power to be willing. "Neither unwillingness, nor willingness, is produced by the action of circumstances, and the necessary movements of the vast machine, in one of the circulating chains of which the human will is a petty link." "A will, the state of which does, in no sense, originate in its own act, is an absolute contradiction." Freedom and accountability commence with, and begin in, the actual distinction between thing and person, or matter and mind.

In the gospel scheme of salvation, we have seen that the provisional work is singly, and without any coincident agency on the part of man; that it is the first and indispensable condition; out of which arises the condition of acceptance, potential, because of the actual provision, and of the influence of the Holy Spirit on and in the will of the sinner, exciting it by the light and vitalizing power of truth. Thus, in the gospel system, God is the efficient, and man the co-efficient. His choice must unite with the choice of God. The inferior must concur with the Supreme Will. Faith is the turning point of this concurrence; it is the condition of salvation. This condition is not exterior and sacramental, but interior and moral. They do err, not knowing the scripture, nor the power of God, who place the condition in the ordinance of water baptism, or in a particular mode of its administration. To make the salvation of the soul dependent on being baptized, either by effusion or immersion, is travelling as far beyond the Record, as in suspending the soul's destiny on receiving the water from the tip of a priest's finger, or the offering up of the mass by a priest. Other condition can no man make, than that

is made in the gospel, which is faith. No tradition, no human authority, no commandment of men, may set this aside. Salvation is of faith, that it might be by grace. According to the gospel doctrine of grace, it is in our power, either to believe in the scriptural sense of the word, or to refuse to avail ourselves of the power of faith. Believing does not pertain to the intelligence alone, but likewise to the will or heart. Truth makes its impression on the soul. The law accuses and condemns: our guilt and corruption is a fact of consciousness. It is the gospel which brings home to the mind and heart the enunciation of the fact, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. By faith, in this central fact, the love of Christ is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost; and the power of God becomes ours. In the gospel plenitude of grace, he saves us from sin and hell.

The intelligence and the will are both active in faith. When the sinner credits the threatenings of God against transgressors, he is stung with fear; a trembling takes hold of him, and he begins to inquire, "What must I do to be saved?" The gospel responds, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." As he hears or reads the promises, he credits them, and hope springs up in his soul. He feels that he is lost—is guilty, and justly condemned. He lingers not in the law-court listening to his indictment; he anticipates the verdict; confesses guilt; appeals to the mercy seat; and hastens to cast himself on the condition of the King's proclamation for a pardon. In the name of Christ he files his plea for the remission of his sins. The moment he relies on Christ, the burden of his guilt is taken away. All his sins are forgiven. Love, peace, and joy spring up in his soul, as a well of water, into everlasting life. In the language of his heart, if not

that of his lips, he cries out, "Bless the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me, bless his holy name." "As far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed my transgressions from me." "My sins, which were many, are all forgiven. He restoreth my soul for his mercy and his righteousness' sake." Every one that believeth, is risen to newness of life in Christ. His heart bears him witness, in the Holy Ghost, that he is reconciled to God, and has complied, from the heart, with the gospel condition of salvation. By faith, the justifying righteousness of Christ becomes his, and he obtains a legal investiture of a right to deliverance from all the penalties of sin. He is freed from the law of sin and death, by the law of life in Christ Jesus; and has his fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. As holiness prevails, the joy and blessedness of salvation go along with it. The gospel is the power of God for the attainment of salvation. Every one that becomes a believer, "shall be kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation." The gospel gives the believer an assurance of salvation in this life. When he is united to Christ, by faith, in that very moment he experiences the power of an endless life. In a correct sense, the believer is *now* said to be *saved*. Present salvation is the earnest of future and final deliverance. If we would be happy hereafter, we must be happy now. If we are now freed from the guilt and corruption of sin, and have the actual joy of salvation, it is our bounden duty, as well as our high privilege, to live henceforward in the strict observance of the precepts of the gospel, from grateful love to God and to Christ. It is obligatory upon us to cultivate a familiar acquaintance with these precepts, and to regulate our whole conduct according to them. In the gospel we learn how to do this. The doctrine of faith as much involves our doing the will of God, as it

does our knowing it. Would we appropriate the promise, we must obey the command. Faith works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world. The Christian lives by faith. By faith he triumphs in death. While the gaping grave is before him, and the pale king of terrors approaches, the dying victor opens his breast and bids them defiance. "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel. "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality," then the believer's salvation will be complete; "then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

Fourthly. We ought to believe the gospel without shame, and boldly maintain our profession of it. Reason approves and justifies us in so doing. True reason and right faith never oppose each other. Faith cannot oblige us to believe that which is against right reason. Faith is above reason, and can take into her heart that which reason can never take into her eye. To be called irrational, is a trifle; to be so, and in matters of religion, is far otherwise. The alternative lies between the gospel of Christ, and something else, as a resting place for the soul. Can a wise man be at a loss which of the two to prefer? The gospel reveals the most honorable view of God's character, law, and government, and a plan of the highest safety to man.

As a theory, the gospel exhibits the greatest possible perfection of ideality to the intelligence. It has a most ennobling influence on man's intellectual condition. It furnishes the conscience with an irresistible and permanent

motive for action, which is powerful to reclaim from vice, and ensure the perseverance of the reclaimed in well doing. Where the principles and spirit of the gospel prevail, they give the greatest elevation, expansion, power, and accuracy of thought, and produce the greatest purity of manners. This, alone, accounts for the contrast between different nations, or different parts of the same nation. The superiority of the one, over the other, is attributable to the prevalence of the gospel in its greater simplicity and purity.

The religion of the gospel is the best ever published to the world. Search the globe around, from the equator to the poles, and no religion can be found, so just to God, and safe to man, none that may be compared to it. The religious emotions are natural to man. He will have a religion, true or false. The Mohammedan makes the Koran the standard of his faith and practice. The pagan bows down to his idol. The red man of the forest utters his desires to the unseen Great Spirit. But the Christian adopts the gospel of Christ as the rule of his faith, and the directory of his conduct. He worships the living God, revealed in the gospel. He trusts in the Lord Jehovah, in whom there is everlasting strength. He knows in whom he believes, and is persuaded that he shall neither be confounded, nor disappointed of his hope. The intellectual and moral excellence of his religion, makes it eminently superior to all other religions. He can discern nothing in the contrast to make him blush; but every thing to make the deep impression on his mind, that the gospel is God's greatest and best gift to man. Every other scheme for the moral reformation and religious improvement of the world, has proved abortive. If you repudiate it, where will you go for a better theory, or a better practical religious element? To the blood and sensuality of Mohammed?

To heathen philosophy? To the cold hearted speculations of Hume and Bolingbroke? To the old principles of French brotherhood, pronouncing death an eternal sleep? To Socialism, disrupting all the ties which God and nature have constituted? Aside from the gospel, we know nothing in which we may trust. Man's moral nature is corrupt at the core. His misery proceeds not from natural causes, in his power to heal; but from a fountain of wickedness within, which can be dried up, or purified only by divine power, even the power of the Cross. This, alone, can strike down and root out the evils of human nature. This, alone, can check and curb the outbreaks of human passion, and bring the spirit of man under the control of the Supreme law.

The gospel has the best influence on this life. All moral and social improvement is derived from it. The belief, that there is a God, is the only security of virtue, and the only barrier against vice. For if there is no God, then there is no standard of morality. Virtue and vice are equal, or rather there are no such things as virtue and vice. There being no moral obligation, there is no restraints on the sinful propensities and passions of man. If acted out in its effects, atheism would convert the world into a theatre of confusion, violence, and misery. Its doctrines are most uncomfortable and gloomy. It subtracts all value from intellectual and moral acquirements, and reduces man to the brute creation.

The gospel assures and confirms immortality to man. The doctrine of a material soul amounts to this—man has no soul. He is simply an animal organization, there being no higher principle in the universe than matter. If so, the fate of man and brutes is the same. Both are matter, and both are destroyed by decomposition. The tendency of such a belief is manifestly pernicious. Once

admit the idea, that your existence will terminate with the present life, your love of virtue and hatred of vice will abate; and, as a certain consequence, you will resign yourselves to the blind impulse of passion, and will direct all your actions by present gratifications. But the gospel gives a very opposite view of man. It teaches, that there is a difference between matter and spirit; that the soul survives the dissolution of the body, and will never cease to exist. Then hope and fear, the strongest propensities by which man is actuated, are not useless. One is directed to the reward of virtue, the other to the punishment of vice. The gospel assures and confirms the prospect of immortality; it supplies the chief principles on which moral motives operate; or it strengthens those principles, to such a degree, as to render them most valuable elements of character and masters of action. The happy tendency of the gospel in this life, demonstrates that it is founded in truth.

The gospel not only teaches the doctrine of immortality, but that of accountability. Moral obligation arises from the nature of God, and, like that, is immutable and eternal. A reasonable creature cannot exist without being under moral law, while he continues to exist. What is more absurd, what is more pernicious in its consequences, than the sentiment, that men are not amenable at the tribunal of God? If they are at liberty to act as they please, without a liability of being called to an account, it at once becomes indifferent to them what character their actions assume. In fact, a disbelief in future accountability, is the genuine offspring of infidelity; and, like that, must excite the abhorrence of all the upright in heart. The gospel cannot be discarded without enervating every virtuous sentiment, undermining the

foundations of society, and reducing the human to the brute creation.

Unless men have faith in God, and faith in what he has revealed, as the Law-giver and Judge of the world, and the alone Saviour of sinners, they will either be concerned in present gratification, or they will slumber on in indifference. On the atheistic supposition, that there is no God, no hereafter, and no responsibility to a higher power for what we are, and what we do, that our acts and our character reach not beyond the grave; of what consequence is it to us, except so far as our present gratification is concerned, whether men worship one thing, or another; whether they are virtuous or vicious; just or unjust; whether they follow the indulgence of one passion or another; whether they are sober or drunken; miserable or happy; saved or lost? Of what consequence is it to us, to what standard our actions conform, so long as they gratify our appetites and passions?

Though elevated above the beasts of the field, the fish of the sea, and the fowls of the air, yet, untaught of God, men never feel for other's woes, and never mourn over human vices and misery. If pity and compassion form any part of their constitution, they lie buried under selfishness and brutality. Hence, the heathen throw their living, but unneeded offspring, into pits and graves, and carry out their aged and infirm to the river's brink, to be devoured by the jackall and the crocodile. In the heathen world was never known an almshouse, a hospital, or an asylum for the suffering. The world is more indebted to the influence of the gospel of Christ, for its order, peace, happiness, and good government, for its moral and intellectual improvement, than to all other causes. Such as never relinquish the maxims of experience, and the

plain dictates of common sense, are not ashamed of the gospel.

It is not only a most excellent rule of life, but it brings to view the best hope for death and eternity. In the gospel, the clouds of doubt and uncertainty are dispersed; a clear light illumines the way of life; and the glories of salvation burst upon us in their full splendor. The righteous man has hope in his death. The end of the upright is peace. He binds the gospel to his heart, as the antidote of death. He is assured, that dying is but going home. As he sinks, in gentle sleep, he says, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in the likeness of my Saviour." The gospel is, to him, an ark of safety. When all things around him sink in the flood of death, the foundation of his faith sustains him, his ark rests upon the top of Ararat, and the dove flies to his window bearing the branch of the olive.

—"Triumphant smiles the victor's brow,
Fann'd by some guardian angel's wing;
O grave! where is thy victory now?
And where, O death! is now thy sting?"

When brought to the bourne of life, the Christian is not alone. Though he now leaves all earthly friends, his Saviour is with him, and, having such a friend and guide, he fears no danger; and to sorrowing friends and relations he is leaving behind, he says, Let your sighs cease, and dry up your tears: so live, as to meet me in heaven. When creation is fading on his sight, and the awful veil, thrown over futurity, begins to draw back, his spirit shrinks not; death has no sting; the grave has no gloom. Thanks be to God, for the triumphant hope the gospel gives to every one that believeth. Possessing a hope so full of immortality, the believer looks at the pale king of terror, the coffin, the grave, himself a sheeted corpse,

and smiles at the dart winged to snatch him from this beautiful world: he sees that lovely land of rest and pure delight above the stars. That terrific monarch of the tomb, whose merciless hand crumbles all into ruin, from the blooming babe to the man of snowy locks, rushes into the family circle—tears away our parents, brothers, sisters, children. We are bereft of our dearest friends and the pledges of our love. They are buried in the dust. The voice of weeping sighs through our dwelling. Our hearts swell with softest grief, our eyes float in feeling tears. But we “sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.” Our sorrow is governed by reason and religion. The gospel does not leave us in ignorance concerning them which are asleep. “For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” The shout of the redeemed and attending angels, the voice of the arch-angel and the trump of God will penetrate the leaden ear of death: all that are in the grave shall awake and come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation. The heirs of salvation shall be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall they ever be with the Lord. The grave is destroyed. Death is swallowed up in victory. The salvation of the gospel is complete and eternal; it brings to view the best and most glorious hope for death and eternity. Reader, fly to the hope the gospel gives; make it yours while you may.

Strange that men are ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It is the only excellent rule of life. The only sure hope in death. O unbeliever! O infidel! why, reject it? A sense of sin loads your mind with guilt, and penetrates your conscience with a fearful sense of a judgment to come. You shudder at the apprehension; but time flies,

and death hurries you to the throne of eternity. Now you make light of the tears, groans, and blood of Calvary; but you are hurried forward to the bourne of life. You look back with regret; you look forward with terror and amazement. Your tears, and groans, and sighs may plead but all in vain. Death pities you not. Your soul, with an exploring eye, looks all around for assistance, but there is none. You must leave for ever the sensual objects of your delight. Go you must, your body lodge in the dark prison of the grave, and your soul forced to the retributions of eternity. A near view of death frightens you with terror, and wrings your heart with agony. As the icy fingers of death press the lungs, that they cannot rise; unnerve the arm of strength, and wither the bloom of beauty; dim the eye, that it cannot see; dull the ear, that it cannot hear; and stiffen the senses, that you cannot feel; then you cast a last and lingering look at the vanishing scenes of earth, and seeing the dark and lonely grave opening at your feet, your blood freezes; the hair rises, and stiffens on your head; keen despair pierces your heart. O! the sting of death! O! the victory of the grave!

Say, ye unbelievers; ye sceptics; who are ashamed of the gospel of Christ; hath not a voice within often warned you of your danger, and urged you to take hold of the hope set before you in the gospel? Will you hear us? when we tell you in love, that the philosophy of the death-bed is a different thing from the philosophy of the study and of the school? Infidels have not been, and cannot be sustained by their principles in the trying hour of death. In general, the "death-bed is the detector of the heart." There the false theory, imbibed in the study and in health, is found to be insufficient to support in the great trial. So weak and false are their own principles

that they cannot trust them in the dying moment. In their attempts to destroy the Christian's hope, they destroy their own happiness, and array the terrors of the Almighty against themselves.

The talented and accomplished young Altamont, as described by Dr. Young, cried out, "Nothing but the Almighty can inflict what I feel. Hell itself were a refuge, if it hide me from thy frown." When the name of Christ was mentioned, he vehemently exclaimed, "Hold! hold! you wound me; that is the rock on which I split. I denied his name."

God smote the haughty Herod; and he was eaten of worms. Voltaire and Rosseau were a terror to themselves, and all around them. Paine's cries to God and Christ were most agonizing. Hume's nurse could tell of his horror-stricken conscience, which so tortured him that he made his bed tremble under him. Sad is the end of infidel philosophers and scoffers, both ancient and modern. Their consciences say to them, on their death-bed, that the false speculations in which they trusted, are vanity and lies, which will ever pierce them with keen despair, and clothe them with shame and endless contempt. O, the strange infatuation and madness of unbelief!

Infidels have labored in vain to overthrow the gospel. It is founded on a rock; and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. But we beg them to pause; and tell us why they would destroy this system of faith, hope, and comfort, adequate, and evidently adapted to the necessities of mankind. Can they furnish another system that has any claims upon the confidence of men? They cannot. But they would blot out the only light of this dark world, and destroy the only hope of man, without giving him any thing as a compensation. Such is the *unnatural* and

cruel part infidelity would act. It is even more cruel than the grave.

“Should all the forms that men devise,
Assault my faith with treacherous art,
I'll call them vanity and lies,
And bind the gospel to my heart.”

It is divine in its origin, and eternal in its destiny. The gospel enunciates truths that will live when time is no more, and that are rooted in the attributes of God: it cannot be extinguished, for God is its light: it cannot die, for God is its life.

SERMON XV.

CHRISTIANITY A SYSTEM OF LOVE.

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“By love serve one another.”—Galatians v. 13.

CHRISTIANITY is a system of love—of love, in its purest, brightest, and divinest form. It is an emanation from the mind and heart of infinite and eternal Benevolence. Its doctrines are the truths of love; its principles are the rules of love; its invitations are the offers of love; its promises are the assurances of love; its very threatenings are the severities of love; and its one great design is, to expel selfishness from the human bosom, and to plant, in its room, a principle of holy and universal philanthropy. Hence, a man may be so intimately acquainted with all the evidences of this Divine system, as to be enabled, by the most powerful and subtle logic, to defend its outworks against the attacks of infidelity; he may understand, and be able to arrange, all its doctrines, as articles of faith, in the most symmetrical order; he may be able, also, to harmonize seeming discrepancies and contradictions; but, still, if he know not that the essence of Christianity is love, he has no sympathy with his inner soul, he has mistaken its genius and its spirit, and is as blind to its richest glories, as the individual whose darkened eye-balls

never look on the glories of the sky, nor the beauties of the earth.

My subject is in harmony with the feelings of my own heart, with the movements of the day, and with the design for which we are assembled this evening. The text is love; and I hope the sermon will, in accordance with the text, be love also.

In the first place, I will endeavor to explain the nature, and to exhibit the grounds and manifestations of Christian love; in the second place, show some of the reasons why the different denominations of professing Christians should exercise this love, one to another; thirdly, point out the manner in which we may manifest this disposition; and then urge a few appropriate and cogent motives.

I. I am to exhibit, first, the nature, grounds, and manifestations of Christian love.

The artificer of deification, as it has been called—the corrupt soul of man—has never been able, amidst all its multiplied devices, to strike out the idea of absolute goodness. And how should it? All its prototypes for the formation of its gods, were founded on itself—on its own passions. But, what idolatry could not do, and, what human reason, in the utmost stretch of its powers, could never accomplish, the Apostle has set before us, in one beautiful expression: “God is love.” This truth has emanated from heaven, and could have come from no other source. The love of God is not an infinite quietism of the Divine mind, retired from all human affairs, and leaving the world to take care of itself; it is an active principle.

Two kinds of love exist in the Divine mind: the love of complacency, which it bears to all the holy parts of creation; and the love of benevolence, which it bears to

the whole creation, irrespective of moral character. Analogous to this, there is, in the mind of every good man, a two-fold love: the love of complacency, which he always bears towards the righteous; and the love of benevolence, which he is to bear to the whole sentient creation. The Apostle distinguishes between these two, where he says, "Add to brotherly kindness charity." Beyond that inner circle, where brotherly kindness "lives, and moves, and has its being," there is an outer circle, in which charity, also, must revolve, and perform its part. And, be it ever remembered, that we are to be no less assiduous in the duties of the outer circle, than we are in those of the inner; and that man, whatever his professions to brotherly kindness may be, has but the name, who adds not to it, charity.

Look at the operations of charity, or the love of benevolence. It was this which existed in the mind of Deity from eternity, and in the exercise of which, he so loved our guilty world, as to give his "only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." It was on the wings of charity, that the Son of God flew from heaven to earth, on an errand of mercy, to our lost and ruined world; it was charity that moved in the minds and hearts of the apostles, and urged them, with the glad tidings of salvation, from country to country. The whole missionary enterprise is founded, not, of course, on the basis of brotherly kindness, but on that of charity. All those splendid instances that have been presented to us, of the exercise of philanthropy, and with which your memories are familiar, are all the operations of this Divine charity. See Howard, leaving the seclusion of his elegant retreat, and all its luxurious gratifications, moving, with heaven-imparted rapidity, from one extreme of Europe to the other, plunging into

dungeons, battling with pestilence, weighing the fetters of the prisoner, gauging the diseases, even of the pest-house—all under the influence of heavenly charity. See Wilberforce, through twenty years of his life, lifting up his unwearied voice, and employing his fascinating eloquence against the most shameful outrage that ever trampled on the rights of humanity. What formed his character, sketched his plan, inspired his zeal, but charity? See that illustrious woman, lately departed, so ripe for glory, and so richly invested with it, who interested herself amidst the prisoners of Newgate—to chain their passions, to reclaim their vices, and to render them more meet for society, which had condemned them as its outcasts? What was it that gave to Mrs. Fry her principle of action? what, indeed, was the principle itself, but charity?

Let us, then, my dear friends, not confine our attention exclusively to “brotherly kindness;” but, passing this narrower boundary, go out into the wide world, with a principle like that which I have just described—which existed in the bosom of Deity—was displayed by the Son of God upon the cross, and is the basis of that institution which it is my delight, and my honor, to plead this evening.

But I am directed, particularly, by the manner in which I intend to treat this subject, to “brotherly kindness”—to brotherly love, as the word would be more emphatically rendered. Brotherly love is founded on two things—a common relation, and a common character. It is the love of all those, who, with us, are disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ—children, by regeneration, of the one living and true God. This is the basis of brotherly love; and if it rests on such ground as this, the man who loves one brother, loves all; and he who loves not all, loves

none. We must go higher for the motives, and sink deeper for the grounds, of brotherly love, than the names most illustrious and venerated by the world. We must sink deeper, for a sure foundation, than the name of Luther, or Calvin, or Whitefield, or Wesley; we must not stop till we touch the rock of ages, which rock is Jesus Christ. He that loves others for the sake of man, loves them with an affection infinitely weaker, than he who loves them for the sake of Christ and of God.

But there is a common *character*, which is also a ground of brotherly love, as well as a common *relation*. The objects of this affection bear one common impress—the image of our heavenly Father. In human families it is sometimes extremely difficult, if not impossible, to trace the resemblance between children and their parents. Not so in the divine family. God never begets a child, by regeneration, but in his own likeness; and where the image of the Father is not discoverable, the relation does not exist. The family likeness, in that circle, where all are related to God, as children to their father, is holiness; holiness is the family feature of the household of faith. And where we see holiness—the mind of Christ—the image of God—whatever be the denomination of the man who bears it; there we should recognize an object of “brotherly love.” And the man who sees all this, and yet waits and wishes for a second reason for his affections; who closes his hand, places it in his bosom, keeps his feelings in abeyance, and holds back his heart, until he has found a denominational relationship, has not a spark of brotherly love in his soul. What! shall not the name of Jesus, shall not the character of God, be enough to enlist our love for one who bears the name and likeness of our Father, and stands united to our Saviour by the tie of a common faith, till we have found

that he is related to us by a party name? We leave you to answer the question.

And how, my brethren, does brotherly love operate where it exists? I shall attempt no description, except a passing remark, on that which the Apostle has already given. "Love suffereth long"—is not easily roused into resentment or malice by injuries great or small; "is kind," in words, in actions, and in spirit; the law of kindness is upon its lips, and the fruit of kindness drops from its hand. "Love envieth not." Envy is that misery which we feel, at the sight of one, whose superior virtues, or liberal endowments have attracted more admiration than we can claim. "Love vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up"—does not boast what it has done, can do, or will do; what it is, or what it has been; but is clothed with the garment of humility. "Love doth not behave itself unseemly"—keeps its place, like a soldier in the ranks, and steps not out of the position in which it was placed. "Love seeketh not her own"—abhors selfishness, looks upon the things of others as well as upon the things of her own; "is not easily provoked"—is not passionate, giving way to ebullitions of rage; "thinketh no evil"—is not hasty to impute a bad motive, as long as a good one can be found, for the actions of another; "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth"—takes no pleasure in the failings and misconduct of a foe, but delights in the manifestations of excellence, even when its own cause would seem to be injured by what it discerns in another; "beareth," or covereth "all things"—has not a microscope in its hand to magnify small failings, nor a telescope to bring near those that are remote, but a mantle to cover all that need not be exposed to public view; "believeth all things," to the advantage of another; "hopeth all things," when there is no ground for faith; "endureth all things"—makes any

sacrifice, bears any labor for the benefit of others. Such are the manifestations of love. Its importance may be estimated by a brief review of some of them.

It is the outward manifestation of an inward principle of belief—"Faith worketh by love." It is the evidence of regeneration, by which we may know that we are the children of God, as certainly, as if a seraph were dispatched from the throne, to tell us that he had seen our names recorded in the Lamb's book of life. It is the great law of the Christian dispensation: "This is my commandment, *that ye love one another.*" It is the badge of discipleship: "By this shall all men *know* that ye are my disciples, if ye *love* one another." Philosophers and teachers had given to their disciples some peculiar sentiments or mark. Says Christ, Love shall be the badge of my disciples, and let that man be accounted an imposter, a pretender, a hypocrite, who has not my mark upon him—who is not distinguished by love to his brethren. Love, untainted with selfishness; neither darkened by hatred, nor shaded by caprice; is an attribute of the Deity, which sums up all the others. Its fair spirit sits enthroned in the heavens, a principle Omnipotent, and element Divine; dwelling with God in the brightness of eternity. Its music is the song of angels; the sigh of sympathizing spirits; the prayer of the humble and the contrite; the tribute of gratitude rendered to the Author of every mercy; the word of kindness dropped from the lip of charity. Love, prevailing at the hour of man's creation, made him only "a little lower than the angels," and gave him a garden for his residence, possessing almost every charm which constitutes a heaven. Love preserves the harmony of the upper sphere, and marks out the progress of the soul through troubles here, and immortality hereafter. Its form was seen, its voice was heard on earth, when the Son of God became incarnate;

and he has bequeathed to his Church, as an inestimable legacy, the power of love, as the essence of his religion.

But, brethren, is there all this beautiful display of love amongst us that there should be? If an angel, that knew nothing of ecclesiastical history, but was totally unacquainted with all the details of its darkened page, and knew nothing of the Church of God, but that it was a company of men and women, redeemed by the precious blood of Him who became incarnate, before whose throne he bowed, regenerated by the same spirit which had filled his heavenly mind with holiness, and destined for that blessed world, from which he had dropped down upon men; I say, if such a visitant were to come among us, what kind of beings would he expect to find? Would he not look for sparkling forms of pure and bright benevolence, so cemented to each other by their love to a common Father, and his to them; that they should scarcely have any separate interest, inclination, or will—all filled with *the most* complacent benignity one towards another, each contributing to the happiness of all, and all building up the happiness of each; who though peradventure they may not in all things think alike, nor be marshalled under the banner of one particular regiment, yet would never allow their differences to embitter their feelings, or to alienate their affections one from another; in short, would he not expect to find in our world so many pieces of immortal glory, flashing the lustre of that world from which he himself came? Alas! what grief he would feel, what disappointment he would experience, at hearkening to the bitter controversy, and witnessing the wide alienation of professing Christians! Would he not conclude that he had lost his way, mistaken his world, lighted upon some other abode than that to which he had directed his course? Would he not say, I came in search of the blood-bought

Church, the love-cemented multitude ; and do you mean to say that this is it ? Is it for this divided, discordant Church, that the Son of God died upon the cross ? Oh ! where is the fruit of his agony, the answer of his prayer ? Brethren, do we not deserve the rebuke ? does not the reproach lie upon us ? God helping us, we will put it away. But is it not true, that the bitter and thorny aloe of Christian contention is quite full blown on the steps of the Christian temple ? Is it not true, that the nettle, and the bramble, spring and luxuriate around it ? Is it not true, that birds of discordant notes send up their screams, instead of a continuous current of prayer, to God ? Brethren, let us, by Divine assistance, pluck up these plants of annoyance, and raise, in their room, the myrtle and the olive, from whence the voice of the turtle—the emblem of peace, shall be heard, soothing into concord the troubled and jarring passions of the whole family of Christians. May heaven grant us such a union ; so, that, if another visitant come to our world in search of the blood-bought multitude, we may be able to present a Church that will not cause him to droop his wings, and go back with disappointment to the skies.

II. We propose to consider, in the second place, one or two reasons, why the different denominations of evangelical Christians should exercise this love one towards another.

First. We all agree in reference to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. We all acknowledge the inspiration and sufficiency of the Scriptures, the Divine Trinity of persons in the essence of the God-head, the incarnation of the Son of God, the great Protestant doctrine of justification by faith, the regeneration and sanctification of the human soul by the Holy Spirit, and the necessity of holiness as the evidence of real faith. Must

I, then, stand aloof from the Episcopalian, who, with me, acknowledges the doctrine of the Trinity, because his views of Church government differ from mine? Shall I refuse my hand to the Presbyterian, because he thinks the Church should be governed by elders, by the many, instead of each particular congregation being independent; while at the same time he believes the incarnation and atonement of Christ? Shall I refuse communion with my Methodist brethren, because they do not see with me in the doctrine of election, and the perseverance of the saints; while I see eye to eye with them, on the doctrine of justification by faith, and regeneration by the Spirit? Shall I scowl on the Baptist, because he refuses to receive children at the font, while, at the same time, he holds with me all the fundamental truths of Christianity?

Brethren, if I retire from a man, because of a difference of minor importance, do I not disparage the grand principles of agreement, and set the minor ones above them? If I do not hold communion with him, because we differ in small things, am I not thereby throwing discredit on the great and fundamental doctrines of God's blessed word? But this is not all. The great evangelical body, in all its divisions, agrees:—

Secondly, in views of personal, vital, and experimental religion. Philosophers may be united on the principles of science; because science has no necessary connection with the state of the heart, and does not necessarily depend, for evidence, on the state of the heart. But the doctrines of Christianity do; they are not like the Aurora Borealis, floating in the pure regions of the atmosphere, but doing nothing for the fertilizing of the globe. The doctrines of the gospel are not like gems in a cabinet, deposited there for show, and not for use; they are all vital principles of action—means of sanctification And, my dear Methodist

brethren, here we are one. You and I agree, most perfectly, that no man is a Christian, because he was born in a land so called; and, that no man becomes a Christian by mere baptism. We hold, together, the religion of the affections; we hold, the necessity of "joy and peace in believing," as the evidences of faith; we hold, in common, the witness of the Holy Spirit, either direct or indirect, or both; and, therefore, in all the principles of experimental and vital religion, we are one, and are called upon, in the exercise of love, "to serve one another."

Thirdly. We are engaged in a common work, and, through Divine grace, are blessed with a common success. Yes: what are we about? Striving, one and all, to bring into execution the plans of the eternal mind, in reference to our own world; to carry into application the death of the Son of God upon the cross; to fulfil the purposes for which the Spirit is poured out from on high, and the Scriptures are written. And we have all done something for this.

Brethren, I honor you. You have carried the lamp of salvation into almost every nook and dark corner of our land; you have covered the country with your chapels; your patriotism is seen in your piety—in what you are doing for the country. Then, I turn my attention from home to foreign parts. I view your progress in New Zealand, Polynesia, and South Africa, with gratitude and delight. I look upon that splendid blossom of missionary hope and prospect, your mission upon the Gold Coast of Western Africa. I turn to Ceylon, and to other parts of the world, and thank God for the tokens of his favor which he has granted you there. We, brethren, have done something mighty; there is no room for jealousy—none for envy. And, here, on the ground of *common success*, is a reason for our loving and serving one

another. When Cowper, the poet of pathos and piety, was recovering from that direful malady under which he suffered from the hand of God, and, in public worship, was acknowledging his thankfulness to the Author of his mercy, in the same pew there sat with him an individual, whose heartfelt gratitude was overflowing in a hymn of praise, in which he seemed so heartily to join, that, says Cowper, "I could not help saying, in my heart, bless you for praising him thus, whom I so much love." I catch the sentiment, and I say, to my Methodist brethren, Bless you for all that you have done for that dear Saviour, whom, without presumption, I dare affirm, I love. And I doubt not, dear friends, that the response will come back, from your society to ours, and we shall bless one another, and God for each other, for what we are doing together.

We are now prepared to consider,

III. The kind of service by which we are to manifest our love to each other, as different denominations.

And, here, I would advocate nothing latitudinarian; I ask for no compromise; for, as long as denominational differences exist, there must be denominational prejudices. And we love our denominations, because each of us deem them most accordant with the word of God; and there is the ground of our love to them. I am no advocate for that spurious philosophy, which sprung up, some forty or fifty years ago, and which proposed to build a system of universal benevolence, upon the destruction of individual tenderness; as if we could love the whole more, by loving each particular part of it less. The order of nature is, to proceed from species to genus, from individual to generality, from that which is near, to that which is remote. Every man, by taking care of his own soul first, is better prepared to take care of the souls of others; he

who looks well to his own family, is contributing to the well-being of the country; the farmer who takes care of distant fields, is expected, first of all, to begin with his own: and so we are expected, in our love to the whole Church, to begin with that section of it to which we may each respectively belong. Therefore, I ask for no relinquishment of attachment, or attention, to that particular part of the great family of God to which we belong; but I ask,

First. That we engage in all those exercises, for each other, by which we can manifest our love, and serve one another, without, in the smallest degree, injuring that part of the Church with which we are more intimately connected. And how shall we do this? By purifying our controversies from all wrath, malice, uncharitableness, and evil speaking; by avoiding all misrepresentations of each other's sentiments; caricaturing each other's systems, or deducing from each other's principles, inferences which we should repudiate with abhorrence; by being careful not to exaggerate the points on which we differ, till we seem to make them of equal consequence with those on which we agree—which, to my idea, seems to be the very essence of sectarianism; by doing nothing to each other, which may lower us in public opinion; by rooting out all the prejudices of education and of sect; by extinguishing all envy of each other's success; by abstaining from all suspicion and doubt, as to the sincerity of each other's motives; by refraining from all underhand proselyting, and by not exposing each other's weaknesses; and, may I now add, by embracing that discovery of modern charity, that, what affects the whole, affects also its parts; that, what strengthens the body, strengthens each limb; and that, what weakens that body, weakens each limb of it. If Popery and Infidelity triumph, it is at the

common expense of us all; if a cloud of reproach hang over the Church of Christ generally, the cold, chilling, and withering power of it, will be felt by each of us. And, what cloud is so dark, what so withering, as the dissensions of the Christian Church? Infidelity, like a vulture, scents the smell of battle from afar, directs her course to the field of conflict, and gorges, and fattens on the blood of the combatants. Popery, like the witches and the wizards of the dark ages, carries on her incantations amidst the uproar of the elements, and the ragings of the storm. Brethren, let us disappoint the appetite of the vulture, and the malice of the wizard; let us come closer to each other; let us come nearer and nearer, for our common defence, and for our common sympathy. "Divide and conquer," is that watch-word which was handed up from hell, by Satan, to his emissaries; "Unite and resist," is the counter word, which heaven gives to us all. And, then, brethren—to make it bear upon the object of our present meeting—"union is strength," inasmuch as the divided state of the Christian Church appears, to me, to be one of the mightiest obstacles in the world, to the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom. God will not employ his Church to bring on the millennium, till that Church is more harmonious. We must be calm, dignified, tranquil, holy, peaceful, to be fit for the great work to which God has called us. He employs the graces, and not the furies, to fulfil his purposes of mercy to mankind. Like the tribes of Israel, *each bearing its own standard*, but *all collecting* round the ark, let us move onward, all standing together, under the cooling shadow of the cloudy pillar, and reflecting together the brilliant splendors of the fiery symbol, that led the consecrated host through the wilderness. Depend upon it, a harmonized Church must be the precursor of a converted world; and, to

my eye, one of the brightest signs of the times, one of the most decisive marks, that God is about to bless us all, in advancing his cause on the earth, is, that he is bringing us all nearer to each other. But this is not all. We must serve each other,

Secondly, by reciprocal help in pecuniary matters. Oh! say some, I cannot, in conscience, subscribe my money to a society which propagates what I consider to be error. I doubt, my brethren, this is rather the logic of the pocket, than of the conscience; because, upon the ground of the objector, I would say, you will admit that there is more truth than error in this denomination that seeks your support; one part error, perhaps, and nineteen parts truth; and then, if you will not give your money to propagate error, you should give your money to propagate truth: and, surely, the nineteen should draw with a stronger hand than the one part would be able to repel. Besides, the man that argues thus, should be quite sure that *he* is infallible, and that there is no subtle mixture of error in anything of his own; which few of us, I suppose, have assurance and confidence to claim.

Thirdly. We must "serve one another," by advocating each other's cause. Of all the sights in our divided, discordant world, there is scarcely any one more gratifying to me than to see a semicircle of members and ministers, of all denominations, collected round the presidential chair of him who acts as the medium of our union and communion at a public meeting. Every missionary platform ought to be a communion table, where all the followers of Christ should meet in the blessed fellowship, and the sweet comfort of love. And what applies to the platform, applies also to the pulpit. We should always be ready to advocate each other's missions; and angels would rejoice over every instance of this kind, as repelling the taunt of

the infidel, and the scoff of the papist, who, in sarcasm, tell us, that our missionary schemes are like many bubbles of enthusiasm, blown by biggots, followed by fools, and that they will explode by the expansive force of their own absurdity ; mere schemes of selfishness, designed to set up our denominations in different parts of the world, to the neglect or opposition of others. Foul spirits of darkness, you lie ! Our object is not sectarian, but Christian ; and all of us have been the happy instruments of converting myriads of men and women “from the error of their ways,” and translating them, with robes washed white and clean in the blood of the Lamb, to the kingdom of our Father. We feel no pleasure in pulling down other Churches, for materials to build up our own ; but we do realize “how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.”

We now proceed to specify :

IV. The motives for this reciprocal exercise of love and service. They are both numerous and influential. Among them we mention :

First. That, in doing so, we serve a common master. We do not mean that we serve the men, who, as instruments of God, have established our particular Churches ; we do not serve Luther, or Calvin, or Wesley, or Whitefield ; but we serve Jesus, before whose throne the happy spirits of these illustrious men, are now—at this very moment, casting their crowns together, and singing, in unison, the song of redemption. We exhibit the same mighty magnet—the cross ; that we may draw men to Christ and make them Christians. Yes, Christian is their surname, whatever baptismal name we may give them in addition. Together, we carry the ark of the Covenant, into the dark realms of Paganism on the one hand, and of Mohammedanism on the other. Bearing.

the sacred vessel, we go on, singing responsively as we go, "The world for Christ!" Angels catch the sound, and, fresh from their harps, send back, with thrilling emphasis, "The world for Christ!" Devils, in despair, groan forth the echo, "The world for Christ!" God in the purpose of his power and of his mercy seals the decree, and says, "The world for Christ." In serving one another, then, we serve Christ.

Secondly. We accomplish the same great object. And what is that object? It is not, my brethren, to turn men from one set of opinions to another, without turning them to God; it is not getting them to renounce the ceremonies of *one* religion, to embrace those of *another*, without worshipping God in the spirit, and serving Christ Jesus, and having "no confidence in the flesh." This would not be worth our pains, nor the money we have been expending. No, brethren, our object is to turn men to God; and, therefore, whoever serves another serves himself, so far as the accomplishment of his object is concerned.

Thirdly. That we employ the same means. What are these? Education for the children, preaching for the adults, and fellowship for the converts. No crucifixes, no relics, no trumpery of Popery, no Romish ceremonies, no holy water, no baptizing children stealthily, no smuggling in priests under the disguise of carpenters, no ships of war, no steamers bearing cannon, no grape-shot fired upon poor defenceless women and children, no Tahitian bloodshed, perfidy, and treachery; we leave these things to Popery, it is worthy of them and they of it. We carry God's blessed word. We send the truth by men who understand and feel it—who appeal to the understanding, to the intellect by reasoning, to the heart by persuasion, to the conscience by all the force of those great motives which are evolved

in the truth. We carry not the edicts of monarchs, the decrees of counsels, the traditions of men; we carry not the statutes of fellow creatures, as the supreme authority; but we go to make the Bible the book of the world, even as it was given to the world; we go under the warrant of Jesus Christ, to "preach the Gospel to every creature." There is, therefore, no reason for suspecting each other; none for standing aloof. We may compare our prospects, the most secret as well as the most public, and we will find, that, as honest men, we can "serve one another;" for we aim to accomplish the same object, by the same appointed means.

Fourthly. We anticipate the same result. Very few of us are taken up with the idea, though in our musing we may dwell upon the subject, that *our* denomination is to be the religion of the Millennium. Perhaps, my brethren, God may intend to take us all to pieces, and make none of our religions exactly that of the latter-day glory, but bring out a new, and a more perfect system than any that has, as yet, obtained. But without troubling ourselves as to what denomination is to prevail in the latter-day glory, it is enough for us to know that there *is* to be a latter-day glory—that there *is* to be a Millennium, in which Christianity will cover the earth in its purest and brightest form. And the man who, in the foresight of the downfall of Popery, Paganism, Mohammedanism, Judaism, and Infidelity, and the raising up of Christianity upon their ruins, holds his heart in abeyance till he has ascertained, if he can, whether it is his denomination that is to prevail—who, in imagination, listening to the shouts of a renovated world, while heaven and earth are responding to each other, "Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" determines not to echo the sound, till he can ascertain whether it is raised by Methodist, or Episcopalian,

or Presbyterian, or Congregational voices; or he who watches the "new heavens and new earth," emerging out of the moral chaos of our world, refuses to rejoice before he has ascertained whether his party is then to be dominant; may be a Sectarian, but he is not a Christian.

Friends of Emmanuel, friends of your species, friends of your Bible, in the hope and the prospect of our regenerated, redeemed world, in which, under the peaceful sceptre of Jesus, the earth shall be delivered from tyranny, and from war—when commerce shall be purified from its stupidity, literature from its pride, and philosophy from its scepticism; do not stand calculating, or conjecturing, who are to do this, and how it is to be accomplished! Brethren, we are all to do it, and God will honor us all; and when our world shall be illuminated, and the latter-day glory shall come, and the light of heaven shall spread over the earth, it will, perhaps, be as impossible to say, who has done most to accomplish this, as it is to say, which of those gas-lights has thrown most splendor around us this evening. Here they are—all illuminating the place together. And so it will be with respect to the glory of that period to which our attention is now directed; we shall all be honored of God, to do something to bring it on, and shall praise him on that day, not only for what *we* have done, but also for what *others* have done. The man who hushes the groans of creation, and spreads a mantle of moral verdure over our desolate earth, shall have my hand and my heart, however much I may differ with him in reference to Church government, the ordinances of religion, or some of the minor parts of Christianity. In prospect of the millennium, when "the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth, as the waters cover the channel of the sea," I see enough to make me rejoice, without asking *who* has done most

to accomplish it, or *whose* opinions will then most widely prevail.

My beloved and honored brethren in the ministry, of every name and denomination that may be present, bear with me, while I give utterance, not, indeed, to the responses of *gracular* wisdom, or to the counsels of patriarchal authority; but, to the effusions of a brother's heart, anxious for your success, and for his own. If Christians are to be "the light of the world," we are to be the light of the Church. If the Church is to be the "salt of the earth," we are to be the salt of the Church. Our influence is great, and our responsibility is proportionate. What I have said, has reference to my office, as a minister of Christ, and not to myself, as a man. Ministers cannot be negative characters. The pulpit, raised, as it is, between the law, on the one hand, and the gospel on the other, is the very centre of the moral universe, and its influence will be felt through time, and through eternity. There is a mighty power in ministerial and pastoral character. They utter the

"Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn."

The minister in earnest, awes by the thunder of his sermon, delights by its music, or kindles by its enthusiasm, the souls of those who hear it. There is, in addition to all this, an immense weight of influence, which we carry with us to the private circle, where a single remark may be the means of starting an immortal soul on a career of glory never to end; or of sending that soul to eternal perdition. Oh! let us consider how much the harmony of the Church, and the conversion of the world, depends on our deportment. In one sense, we are the channels, through which the blessings of God descend to the Church and to the world. Oh! let us beware how we choke those

channels by indolence, negligence, or carelessness, lest the accumulating current overcome, and overwhelm us for ever. The destinies of immortal souls hang upon our hands, and we may either hand them up to heaven, or thrust them down to hell. Let us, then, in these eventful days, look up to God, by fasting and prayer, for Divine instruction to qualify us for our fearfully responsible office. My venerable fathers in the ministry—you upon whom the snows of time's winter have descended—you who have had such ample time to study the worth of souls, the value of divine truth, the importance of salvation, and the terror of damnation; and you, my younger brethren, who have just entered upon the arduous duties of your office, and begun to feel the warm kindlings of enthusiasm; old and young, one and all, come up at once, "to the help of the Lord; to the help of the Lord against the mighty." May we all consider, that God will hold us responsible for what we do, for the Church and for the world! Upon us hang the interests of our Master, which will flourish or decay as we appeal to the minds and hearts and consciences of our people. May God lead us to meditate upon these tremendous truths; for sometimes it does appear to me wonderful, that, with such interests hanging upon us, we can be so light-hearted, or, can find any rest upon our beds. May the Lord God grant that we may be found faithful—kindling the purest and the brightest zeal in the souls of our hearers, and aiding onward the triumphal car of the Redeemer, who goes forth "conquering and to conquer!"

Brethren, what need I say to you on the subject of your missions? As to their nature, their importance, their extent, and, at the same time, their claims; you know all this better than I do. God has greatly honored and blessed you. Without one particle of envy, without a single

feeling but that of thankfulness, I can think of your more than one hundred thousand pounds per year, for the support of your missions. I can only stand and wonder, and adore. You leave us far behind. We wish that we were up with you; but we do not for a moment regret that you are blest of God to the extent of your liberality. Go on and prosper. You have missions of which any denomination under the sun might (I will not say be proud,) but for which any one, and every one might be thankful. To whatever part of the vast field I turn my eyes, I see every thing which you should feel as a motive and stimulus to greater zeal. Look at the West Indies, where you began; what wonders has the Lord achieved by you there! Look at Ceylon; how many, in that eastern part of the world, have you turned from following dumb idols, to serve the living and true God? Look at your more modern missions of Polynesia; look at New Zealand; look at the Fejees: in all these spots of God's world you have motives for increased thankfulness, and still greater zeal. May the Lord bless you in your mission to Africa; may you be the honored instruments of carrying the gospel into those regions that are full of the habitations of cruelty! There plant the standard of the Cross, amidst those pyramids of human skulls, and other marks of ferocity, which have troubled the feelings, and inspired the zeal of your missionaries. Go on, brethren; you have reached an elevation which might lead any one to suppose that it needs no stimulus, and admits of no increase. But the Methodist body will repudiate the idea. It would be as bold an attempt for any man to fix the *ne plus ultra* of Methodist zeal, as of scientific research and attainment. Halt, is not a word which your leaders are accustomed to give to those who follow them; to retrograde is not a motion

which you are accustomed to make. Onward! is the cry. Your missionaries abroad give the sound, and joyous echo responds to it here.

I desire, in conclusion, to propound four questions for your prayerful consideration. *May* you not do more? *can* you not? *should* you not? and *will* you not?

May you not when the world is before you, and Providence your God; when there is no limit but that which your means impose upon your efforts; when doors are opening to every nation, and voices from heaven and earth are saying, "Come and help us?" You *can* respond to these trumpet calls. Where is the man who will rise, loaded with luxuries, bestowed upon him by Providence, and say, "I *cannot* do more!" *Cannot* is a fearful word for any one to utter, in reference to duty. *Should* must be measured by *can*. Whatever *can* be done *should be done*. *Will* you, then, do what *may* be done; what *can* be done; and what *should* be done, to arrest a reckless world, now rushing down to ruin; and send it back with heaven-imparted rapidity, to "take hold upon eternal life?" The auditing Angel is recording your answers in Heaven, and you must shortly be judged, and approved or condemned by them.

Brethren, I have done. I throw this offering upon the altar of your cause, with one regret, and one only—that it is not more worthy of the cause, and the occasion.

SERMON XVI.

MANIFESTATION OF THE DIVINE GLORY.

BY REV. MATTHEW SIMPSON, D.D.,

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Western Christian Advocate.*

"And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live."—Exodus xxxiii. 18—20.

CORRECT views of the divine character lie at the foundation of true religion. We may not, indeed, fully understand all the attributes of the Deity, or even know their precise number, but with such as most directly influence human character and conduct we may become acquainted through nature and revelation. Where nations have acknowledged "lords many and gods many," discord and war have been, not mere casualties, but natural and almost necessary consequences of their theology. If Mars and Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, had conflicting interests in heaven, and if fierce contests raged among the gods, what else could be expected of

their worshippers on earth? As there were "gods of the hills and gods of the valleys,"—as each nation traced its origin through a long line of ancestry to some one of the contending deities,—so it might be expected that each nation should be jealous for the honor and glory of its founder.

The unity of the Deity revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and the common origin of the human family expressly asserted, sweep away, at once and for ever, the greatest justification for hostilities, and all pretence for tyranny and oppression. We have but one God, and we are all brethren.

The attributes with which the divine character is invested have also a powerful influence on the mind. If to the Deity is ascribed, as in heathen mythology, the possession of the animal propensities and desires, then the worship will be conformable to such desires, and licentiousness and extravagance of every description will be mingled in the ceremonies. The rolling wheel shall crush its victim, the fire consume the infant offering, or purity be sacrificed unblushingly at the altar of the commanding deity.

Carrying forward the same train of thought, we shall find that even under the full light of the system of Christianity, the peculiar aspect in which the divine character is viewed will greatly modify Christian conduct and enjoyment. Notwithstanding all read the same revelation, and ascribe the same attributes to the Deity, yet, perhaps, each individual fixes, in a different degree, his estimate of the relation of these attributes to man; and, possibly, in each mind, some one of the divine attributes is more regarded, or at least more constantly a subject of thought, than any other. Thus, upon one may rest a sense of the terrible majesty of God: he may seem to hear his

voice, as when it spake in such awful grandeur from the top of Sinai. On another may rest a sense of awe and veneration, and the still small voice seem ever to sound in his ears, "Be still, and know that I am God." To a third, is presented most vividly the idea of holiness; and to a fourth, the idea, the triumphant thought, is, "God is love."

These various views must greatly modify our mode of approach before God. He whose mind is filled with ideas of terrible grandeur, and stern majesty, to whom every voice seems to proclaim, "Our God is a consuming fire," must, when his soul is penitent, approach, even in prayer, with overwhelming awe; while another, who regards the Deity as an affectionate Father, though he come confounded by a sense of his guilt, and melted at the thought of the amazing condescension of an offended Ruler; yet, viewing the extended arms of mercy expanding to meet the returning prodigal, even dares to "come *boldly* to a throne of grace."

Many of the young—and for them our remarks are made—are taught, even in the nursery, to clothe the Deity with attributes of vengeance. As they grow older, the idea strengthens in their mind—Religion is a fearful thought—moroseness, or terror, becomes most intimately associated with their notions of Christianity, and they will not think of God, because the idea is one of awful dread. And perhaps few passages in the Word of God have been more frequently used, to strengthen this impression upon the mind, than that part of our text, "For there shall no man see me and live."

Being persuaded that LOVE is the great characteristic of the Deity, as revealed through Christ, and that all

young persons ought so to be taught, we propose to investigate :—

I. What Moses desired when he prayed, “I beseech thee, show me thy glory.”

II. How far this desire was satisfied ; and,

III. Why he could not obtain all that he desired.

I. First, then, let us consider the desire of Moses.

The “glory of God” is used, in the sacred writings, in several distinct meanings. Sometimes it is applied to an exhibition of some grand or astonishing appearance, indicating supernatural power and glory ; sometimes to a display of the power, wisdom, and benevolence, of the Deity, in his works ; sometimes to his dispensations towards man, as seen in the history of individuals ; and sometimes to his purposes of mercy yet to be revealed. By further examination, we may see to which one of these the desire of the leader of Israel was directed.

1. Did he desire to behold some grand and glorious manifestation of the Deity ; some outward form, or shape, to represent the great Jehovah ? Why should such be his desire ? In the first place, he must have had correct views of the Deity ; he must have known that “God is a spirit ;” that “no man hath seen God at any time ;” that a spiritual being cannot be materially discerned ; and that though a glorious light, or thick clouds and sounds of power, may accompany his revelations to man, yet that light, or those clouds or sounds, indicate his presence, but do not represent his form ; they exhibit his power, not his person. We say, Moses must have known all this, because he was taught the knowledge of the true God from his childhood—tradition from Shem to Moses passed through but few hands—and then he had been taught of God. Forty years had he wandered in solitude ;

a shepherd's life gave him time and opportunity for divine communion—for deep and holy reflection. When thus prepared, great revelations had been given to him, and he had conversed with God in the hallowed mount for forty days—had received the immutable law for the human family—and, consequently, must have known much of the Divine character.

Our tendency to attach form to the Deity, arises from the limited nature of our faculties. We are principally influenced by external qualities; we judge by them; and though we know a spirit has not the ordinary qualities of matter, yet we can form no distinct conception, without associating some of them. When we think of an angel, or the spirit of a departed one whom we loved on earth, though we give no definite form, yet there is something which flits before the mind. It may be a small bright cloud, so greatly attenuated as to be scarcely perceptible—a thin light mist—a floating vapor—but still there is form. So, in our ordinary conceptions of the Deity, though we know he hath not body and parts, yet we imagine some appearance. It may be superlative brightness, or terrible majesty; infinitely varied may be our conceptions as to magnitude, form, and locality; still there is an appearance. And this, we may casually remark, has ever been a fruitful source of idolatry.

As these views arise from the imperfections of our faculties, or from our want of knowledge, we cannot properly attribute them to one so advanced as Moses in knowledge, both human and divine. But, in the second place, why should he desire to behold such external displays of glory and power? He had worshipped at the burning bush; had been made the messenger of God, to announce the most astonishing prodigies to the Egyptians; at his word, the Nile had flowed in currents of blood;

darkness had, in its most fearful form, brooded over the kingdom; and the messenger of death had made every family to send forth a long, loud, piercing wail for the first-born. The sea had divided at his approach; the divine presence, as a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, had been his guide and protection; and, lastly, he had stood amidst the terrific scenes of Sinai, until he exclaimed, "I do exceedingly fear and quake." What greater manifestations could he wish to behold? Surely these had been enough, more than enough, to satisfy the most enlarged desire.

2. May he have used the expression in the sense of the Psalmist where he says, "The heavens declare the glory of God;" desiring to understand more of creative power and skill? There can be no doubt that he earnestly desired to know all that could be known in reference to the great work of creation. But probably he had, before this time, received by revelation the history of the world's production. He had stood as on some distant eminence, and beheld when "He spake and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." He had seen the earth springing into existence, robed in innocence and loveliness, while "the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy." And having received such views, standing thus as a witness to this great fact, he could scarcely have asked for further description.

3. Is it probable that he desired to behold the glory of God, as manifested in his past government of the world? In this he had already been instructed. He had been made the world's sole historian for near two thousand years. Before his mind had passed the history of the race, with all its mutations; its creation in innocence and majesty; its dreadful fall; ejection from Paradise; its

stains of sin upon the earth, too deep to be effaced even by the rush of waters in the mighty deluge. Not only had he received Abrahamic traditions, and all that Egyptian lore could furnish, but God himself had been his great instructor, to show to man, through him, his "glory," in the rise and fall of empires, the elevation or degradation of the race.

4. Since, then, his prayer could not refer to external exhibitions of the glory of the Deity, or to his creative power, or past government of the world, it only remains for us to turn toward the future. And if we view the circumstances surrounding him, we shall see that, by his prayer, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory," he desired to understand the merciful purposes of God towards the Israelites, and through them to the world. He anxiously wished to understand more fully the whole plan of salvation, and to see the things that should happen in the "latter days."

That the Almighty had great designs in view in reference to the Israelites, he had a right to infer, from what had already been done for them. As when an architect collects in one place, a vast quantity of materials, we have a right to expect the erection of some magnificent edifice; so, from previous and vast preparation on the part of the Deity, some event of momentous importance might be inferred. Abraham had been called from his native land and from among his kindred; had travelled over Canaan in expectation that it should be his, while yet owned and inhabited by powerful nations; his sons had been trained under peculiar circumstances; providentially led into Egypt, and then made a race of slaves, oppressed and shamefully treated; then rescued amidst signs and wonders "with a high hand, and an outstretched arm," while the sprinkled blood of the slaughtered lamb prefigured a

higher and holier deliverance of humanity from a still more accursed bondage. What connection this had with the hope of a Messiah who should wield a sceptre, and of a Prophet who should teach his people, he could not fully see: and what meant all this vast display in the wilderness; this heavenly direction; this manna from on high; the tables of the law; the tabernacle with its symbols and ceremonies, he could not fully comprehend, but, in the earnestness of his soul, he prayed, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory."

Again, the circumstances through which he had just passed were of a most singular character. He had been upon the sacred mount. Israel had said, "Let not God speak with us;" and Moses had stood as their representative for forty days. But this very people who had heard the voice of God, had turned to idolatry at the foot of the mount. Their jewels had been collected and formed into a golden calf—the god of the Egyptians, from whose service they had been delivered. "They had set down to eat, and rose up to play." With what feelings must the man of God have turned from the mount; from converse with the Deity! But as he descended, and the sound of revelry burst upon his ear, he could restrain himself no longer; he dashed from his hand the tables of the law, written by the finger of Omnipotence, and they brake at the foot of the mount.

This act was censurable; and yet it furnishes no small indication of the feelings by which he was then influenced, the views by which he was governed. He may have supposed that the Israelites were honored because of their faith. They were free from idolatry. And it was right that an idolatrous nation should be destroyed, to furnish this pious people a place of abode. But if so, what now shall be done to the Israelites? Bad as were the

Canaanites, the Israelites were far worse. The people of Palestine had been taught idolatry; they had seen no miracles; no pillar of fire had guided them; no sea had been divided before them; they had not been fed from heaven; and had never heard the voice of God. Their sin was in part palliated by ignorance. But this people, while eating bread from heaven, with the throne of God in their midst, surrounded with the clouds of his grandeur hanging in awful magnificence as curtains around the mountain's summit, while he himself was penning for them his eternal law, as if to insult him, had made a golden calf. They had clothed it with the attributes of Jehovah; ascribed to it the miracles of the deliverance, and then, as in mockery, had cried out in the ear of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

Nor was it only the thoughtless, the ignorant, the obscure, that engaged in this blasphemy. Aaron—the eloquent Aaron—the mouth of Moses, when he spake the word of God unto Pharaoh, with the elders of Israel, had joined in the impious rites. Under such circumstances, if Canaanites merited the wrath of God, seventy and seven fold should be the vengeance taken on Israel. If to the one were appointed the destroying sword, what but fire from heaven to consume, or a yawning earth to engulf, could be a fit punishment for the deeds of the other? Is it wonderful, that Moses should cast from his hands a law for which this people were now unprepared, and should, in the anguish of his heart, despair for them as to the mercy of God?

But vengeance does not fall from heaven. The people are still spared. And, after various periods of supplication, he is even answered, "My presence shall go with thee,

and I will give thee rest." What can this mean—the idolatrous Canaanite cut off, the idolatrous Jew spared? Some great development must be in preparation, some grand display of the divine character. What can be the measure of that mercy, which is preceded by the preparatory act of the pardon of two millions and a half of people? His longing soul desires to know all the purposes of God. The act of mercy, just witnessed, kindled within him a greater love for God, a more earnest wish to fathom the depths of his goodness; and, with the vehemence of intense desire, he cries out, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory"—grant me a full exhibition of thy mercy and thy love.

II. Let us next consider, how far this desire was satisfied.

In answer to this earnest prayer, the Deity replies, (v. 19,) "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." Again, in verses 21—23, "Behold there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock; and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by; and I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts." And again it is said, in chap. xxxiv. 5—7, "And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgressions, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the

children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."

In this manifestation of the divine character to Moses, a few particulars may be noticed.

1. He proclaimed the *name of the Lord* before him. This probably refers to such a general view of the divine administration as exhibits the benevolence, holiness, and justice of God, intimately blended in the government of man.

2. He made all his *goodness* pass before him. This was probably a prophetic view of his mercy to the Israelites as a nation; in which was exhibited not merely his sparing them on that occasion, but their settlement and continuance in the Holy Land, and the strict fulfilment of the promises made to the patriarchs in their behalf.

3. He showed him his administration as a *sovereign*. "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." Here was explained the difference of the treatment of Israel and Canaan. The latter had filled the measure of their iniquity, as a nation, and no great benefit would be secured to the race by their national existence; while the former, though guilty of aggravated sins, might, as a nation, be made a blessing to the world. And that, for the accomplishment of some great good to man, a nation might be made the subject of *mercy* and *grace*, as to civil existence and prosperity, without any actual good deserts; thus showing the *national* bearing of a passage, with which many pious individuals have been greatly perplexed. Yet the same principle may have, and doubtless often has had, application to individuals, so far as *temporal position* is concerned, but not extending to their *salvation*. Yet both as to nations and individuals, when the day of employment shall be over, crime shall be visited with

punishment; in the individual it might not be on earth, but in nations it shall be visited "upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."

4. He gave him a prophetic view of the mission of Christ. This is indicated in the expression, "Thou shalt see my back parts." The Hebrew word in this place, translated "back parts," refers to *time* as well as to *position*. And many able commentators and critics have referred this passage to the incarnation of Christ. This rendering conforms so well to the general use of the word, and to the tenor of Scripture, that there can be but little doubt of its correctness. And a free-translation might be, "Thou shalt see me, as manifested in the *latter days*."

The revelation appears to have been given to Moses, to strengthen his own faith, and to fit him for those arduous duties required of the leader of such a people. He is placed in a "cleft of the rock," and before him passes, as though spread out on an immense canvass, the representations of the future. He beholds the goodness of God to the rebellious Jew; sees him settled in the Holy Land; kings and princes, wise and noble, and holy men, adorn their race, and Judea is a blessing to the world. And, as the pillar of cloud, and the ark and its mercy seat, are sometimes called the glory of God; so he beholds, in the institutions of his people, in the influences of his law, and the messages of the prophets, the "glory of God" spreading among men. But a shade falls upon the canvass. The Deity hides the future in his hand. Again his hand is removed—the indications of some grand coming event become closer and closer, as rays of hallowed light emerging to a focus, until, at last, as the "glory of the only begotten of the Father," he beholds

"the seed of Abraham, in whom the nations of the earth shall be blessed;" the "Shiloh" of Jacob, who grasped the departing sceptre of Judah. His soul leaps forward to meet him on the mount of transfiguration; joy swells his heart, and he can hear no more. He bows his head and worships.

III. We can now inquire why his petition was not fully granted.

1. From what has been already expressed, we are prepared to assume, that it was not because in any manifestation there would be such terrific grandeur as should destroy human existence. For, first, Moses, we think, did not pray for external manifestations. These could be but symbols; and, however vast and magnificent the symbols might be, they never could, adequately, represent the divine character. But, secondly, there is no intimation made, as we think, that if an exhibition were given, it would be one of terrific majesty. If the dispensations of God toward man are pre-eminently characterized by mercy, and if his love cannot be expressed in language, and could be adequately revealed only in the incarnation and passion of his only begotten Son; then, if his character could be portrayed by symbols, if his glory could thus be made known, the symbols must be those of superlative benevolence, of condescending grace. We are aware that the expression of the apostle, "For our God is a consuming fire," is sometimes quoted to sustain the terrific view of the divine character; but this refers to his judgments upon the finally impenitent, and not to any manifestations or dispensations toward those who are still on probation.

2. The language employed in the text, "Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live;" does not express any reason why man is unable to bear a

view of the Deity. It simply declares the fact, that man cannot see the face of God. If, then, we inquire what is meant by the term "face," we are at once satisfied that it can have no such application to a spirit as it has to man. It must be used figuratively. And as the face is that part of the human form which remains uncovered and visible; that part which particularly indicates to others the definite person or individual; while other parts of the form are protected by raiment—so the term is used figuratively to signify that which is fully or clearly seen: and when applied to the Deity, would be a full revelation of the divine character; embracing all his plans of mercy and benevolence to his created intelligences.

3. The reason why man could not behold this revelation and live, would not be because of its terror or majesty; but because the view of the riches of His grace, his compassion, and benevolence, would excite emotions of reverence, of admiration, of love, and of joy, too overwhelming for humanity to bear. Each manifestation of the benevolence of God, called forth songs of joy and ascriptions of praise from those who heard them in ancient times. They rejoiced when they beheld the "bow of promise," spanning the arch of heaven with its glorious array of colors; when they saw the intervention of the pillar of cloud by day, and the guidance of the pillar of fire by night; when the sea parted before them, and they saw the salvation of God; when, for the deliverance of Israel, the Assyrian host was smitten before the angel of the Lord; when the divine glory descended, and rested upon the tabernacle they had reared; and when, after their captivity, the second temple was erected and consecrated, amidst the tears and rejoicings of the restored captives. At these, and many other displays of benevolence and love, the ancient Jews rejoiced greatly.

The spirits of the prophets rejoiced within them, when, in vision, they beheld the day of Christ; and when the devout Simeon beheld even the infant Jesus brought into the temple, his joy swelled into ecstasy, and feeling all he could desire, he cried out, in rapture, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Now, if, in these cases, a single view had such an effect, what would be the result, if all the mercy and compassion of God, in its unbounded immensity, and inexhaustible fullness, could, at one moment, be revealed to the human mind? Humanity could not bear the vision. No man can see "the face of God and live;" because the sublimity of the view would produce not only "joy unspeakable and full of glory," but joy, at which the soul should be unfitted for residing in the body. To support this view, we may reflect, that things exciting emotions, even of a pleasurable character, may extend so far as to become destructive, and that emotions of joy may, in themselves, destroy life. Light is pleasant, it spreads a halo of beauty and glory around the face of nature. The eye is never satisfied with the revelations which are made through its medium. Yet, let that light, which thus spreads beauty around, fall upon the eye in the concentrated form of a ray from the meridian sun, and the power of vision is impaired, if not totally destroyed. What delight is communicated by means of sound! the melody of birds—the murmur of the water-fall—the music of instruments—and the sound of that sweetest and richest of all instruments, the human voice—awaken the most pleasurable emotions. And yet, let that murmur of the water-fall be changed into the roar of the cataract, and it is deafening. Sound may be so intense and prolonged, that the auditory nerve shall no longer respond to its vibrations.

The same is true of mental emotion. How the mind operates upon the body, we cannot tell. No anatomist has detected the fine chords which bind spirit and matter together. But that the emotions of the mind do affect the body, is universally admitted. Death from surprise, from fright, from terror, from all the depressing passions, has been by no means uncommon. And where death has not ensued, how many have been made maniacs for life! Nor is excitement confined to the unpleasant emotions. Scenes of sublimity may inspire, as much as scenes of terror can alarm. Man's soul responds as quickly and as strongly to the beautiful, the lovely, the good, as to that which offends or disgusts. And the emotions, arising from the beautiful, are no more under our control, and are no more limited in strength, than those of the opposite character.

In the every-day walks of life, who has not known of a case like this? A beloved son has left the home of fond parents to engage in commercial pursuits, or visit some distant place. By various causes his stay is prolonged, until, at last, the tidings reach his parents, that he was wrecked off some rocky coast; or, that he perished in a fatal epidemic. They mourn for him as one that is lost; and they think of him only as in the spirit world. Years pass away, and, though strangely preserved, his parents are not aware of his existence. He starts for home. Already he stands upon the hill that overlooks the scenes of his boyhood; the house, and trees, and shrubs, all stand as when he left; his heart exults at the thought of embracing his parents, and, thoughtless as to consequences, he hastily approaches. He opens the door. His mother gazes at him but a moment, cries, "My son! my son!" throws her arms fondly around his neck, and swoons away in his arms.

And instances have occurred, in which, from that swoon, there has been no recovery.

Nor can it be said that such cases occur only among the weaker and more nervous portions of the human family. All are excitable. They may differ as to the objects which excite, and as to the degree of excitement produced by any definite object; but still, let the subject be one about which their minds are deeply interested, and all are susceptible of intense excitement. The grave and steady citizen, in times of great political discussion, when he supposes the welfare of his country is dependent on the result of an election, becomes so deeply interested, that he loses his customary self-control. And when, at the close of a warmly-contested canvass, his party triumphs, he tosses his cap wildly in the air, or joins in the loud exultation.

History informs us, that in the time of the great South Sea speculation in England, many, overjoyed by their success, became insane. At the restoration of Charles II. a number of the nobility were so affected by the recovery of their titles and estates, that they became diseased, and in a short time died. Leo X. one of the most renowned occupants of the Papal chair, was so rejoiced by a victory somewhat unexpectedly gained over his enemies, that he sunk beneath the excitement. The heir of Leibnitz, the celebrated mathematician, on finding that a chest, filled, as he supposed, with papers, contained a large quantity of gold, became so excited by the discovery, that he was seized with a fatal disease of the heart. The celebrated Rittenhouse, Pennsylvania's earliest astronomer, was selected to observe the transit of Venus across the sun's disc, in order that the correctness of many of the astronomical calculations might be tested. Having made all necessary arrangements and calculations, he watched

earnestly for the expected transit; and when, at the calculated moment, he saw the dark boundary of the planet obscure the edge of the sun's disc, he was so overcome with emotion, that he swooned away, and his assistants were obliged to finish the observations. The immortal Newton, when he approached toward the completion of those calculations that demonstrated his discovery of the great laws of nature, and that gave him an imperishable name, and when he saw that his conjectures were about to be verified, was so deeply affected, that he was obliged to leave to others the work of completing his calculations. Near the close of the revolutionary war, the attention of Congress, and of the whole American people, was directed toward the armies of Washington and Cornwallis, and some movement was daily expected, having a powerful bearing upon our country's liberty. When the messenger arrived, bringing the joyful intelligence that Cornwallis had surrendered, the door-keeper of Congress fell dead upon the floor of the hall.

If such, then, be the influence of joyful emotions, when arising from temporal subjects, will the effect be diminished by adding the revelation of the unseen and eternal? Can emotions, excited by a view of the majesty, holiness, wisdom, and compassion, of the eternal Jehovah, be less strong, than those excited by considering a small portion of the work of his hands? And is it unreasonable to expect, that the truths of Christianity will produce deep and powerful religious emotion? If an astronomer shall swoon, and a Newton sink overpowered by the discovery of some of the laws by which the Deity governs the material world; if Pope Leo should sink through joy at the triumph of his army, and a patriot die at the triumph of his country; if the unexpected inheritance of

a chest of gold, or the restoration of rank and estate, should destroy the action of vital organs; what shall be said of him on whose vision should burst the revelation of the laws of the Deity in the moral world; a full view of the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus, and of his amazing condescension and love in giving his Son to die to save a rebellious world fast sinking into destruction, and by his offers of mercy, and the influences of his Spirit, raising feeble, sinful man, to the throne of his glory, having first purified him from all iniquity? If natural emotion may be so intense that the soul and body cannot unitedly subsist, well may it be said of such a manifestation, "There shall no man see me and live."

As a general inference from this subject, we may notice what a sublime view is thus presented of the revelation contained in the word of God.

1. It is a system of truth; in which, directly or indirectly, each separate truth leads to the great commanding truth of the being and attributes of God. This is the substance of revelation; God displayed in creation, in government, and in mercy to man. All other statements are but as secondaries, revolving around their primary. The whole of revelation is such a view of the character of God as shall attract men to virtue, to happiness, and to glory. And as the character of God is infinite in its perfections, it can never be perfectly comprehended by finite minds. So much of the truth may be readily embraced as shall set man free from the power of other attractions, but there is still an inexhaustible remainder. The greatest minds may here be for ever engaged; intellect may learn much; prophets and kings may gaze with delight; and even angels shall desire to look into these sublime truths; but, like the

parallel lines of the mathematician, there may be eternal approximation without perfect attainment.

2. But revelation is not merely a system of sublime truth. It is truth so presented as to affect our sensitive nature. It is not abstract speculation alone that is employed; our affections, our sympathies, are all enlisted. It is a system intended to operate upon man. It operates, first, by presenting the grand, the lofty, the majestic attributes of the divine character. And as the contemplation of great characters, the association with the great personages of earth, inspire the soul with lofty sentiments and high purposes, so the revelation of God's majesty becomes a powerful cause of elevation to man. It is fixing in an immovable position a fulcrum which, more than the lever of Archimedes, shall move in elevating humanity toward the throne of God. It operates, secondly, by inspiring man with what is termed, technically, the sympathetic emotion of virtue. The performance of a brave, a noble, a patriotic, or a virtuous act, makes us desire to do the same. And when God reveals himself as a God of mercy, employing his omnipotence in acts of compassion, there is a voice that whispers to the heart, through every such manifestation, "Be ye merciful, even as I am merciful." As that mercy is over all his works—as his sunshine and showers fall upon all alike—as his Son suffered for all—so the compassion taught us is universal. The soul, under such influences, desires mercy upon all. It sends the Bible on the wings of the morning, carrying light and animation to the uttermost ends of the earth. It sends the missionary to bear the glad tidings of great joy, which warmed even angels' hearts, to those that sit in the valley and shadow of death. It opens the school and founds the college, and seeks in every possible manner to benefit the race to which we belong, and

toward which God hath showed such amazing mercy. It operates, thirdly, by exciting gratitude and joy for personal salvation—for pardon, for regeneration, and for adoption into the family of the Most High. The grateful soul is ready to exclaim, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me!" "What am I, and what is my Father's house," that I should thus be the subject of divine love! And that gratitude and joy become vastly expanded by the reflection, that similar favor is showed to all our kindred and to all our race; that our fathers were the subjects of mercy, and our children, and our children's children, shall inherit the same salvation; that in every clime, tongue, kindred, and people, may be experienced the same joys of pardoning mercy. At such a view we may well exclaim with the Apostle, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" A fourth effect of such revelation is, that the soul desires to dwell constantly as in the presence of God. In him is all fullness—the treasures of wisdom and knowledge for the intellect, of grace and mercy for the soul. He becomes the Alpha and the Omega to the believing heart; and, as the Deity grants such personal communion, the soul becomes refined and purified. The world diminishes in value; eternity, with all its spiritual blessedness, gradually unfolds before the moral vision; and the limit of joy is only found in the necessity of fitness for duties here. There is no limit in the fullness, glory, and sublimity of the divine character. There is no limit in the willingness of God to impart, for "He that spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" There is no limit of power as to the agent, "For we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from

glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The limit is only found in the fact, that humanity can best discharge the duties imposed on us here when those manifestations are not overwhelmingly grand. Under this limitation the spirit of the Bible is a spirit of joy, crying constantly to the true Christian, "Rejoice evermore, and again I say, rejoice."

3. That such are the effects of the manifestation of God's mercy, we are further warranted in believing, from the history of distinguished individuals. Moses, when the name of the Lord was proclaimed before him, and his goodness passed before him, "made haste and bowed his head toward the earth and worshipped." He adored and revered. But in the midst of that adoration there was no such alarm as made Israel say, "Let not God speak with us;" his soul desired still the presence of God, and his immediate prayer was, "Let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us." And such was the influence of the manifestations he received, that his face shone with such glory that the people could not look upon him unveiled; or, in other words, the manifestations of goodness and of glory were carried to the utmost possible point at which his usefulness to the people of Israel could remain. When Daniel was showed in prophetic vision the return of the captive Jews, and when the succession of empire was revealed, and the things that should happen in the latter days, he says, "There remained no strength in me;" and before he was able to hear the whole prediction, the angel touched him to strengthen him. On the mount of transfiguration the disciples were so overwhelmed that "they knew not what they said," or did not fully see the impropriety of their request, and yet were so enchanted that they said, "Master, it is good for us to be here." The Apostle to the Gentiles, who, in the learning of his

age and in strength of intellect had few if any equals, was so charmed with heavenly visions, that whether he was "in the body or out of the body" he could not tell; while the exiled Apostle on the Isle of Patmos fell as one that was dead.

4. What an unfailing source of comfort and joy is opened for the Christian in the revelation which God hath given! His joy is not of this world, it is in God. The world may change, but God changeth not. God's glory never faileth—the Christian's spring of happiness never runs dry. What a beautiful figure to represent this life from God is that employed in the description of the New Jerusalem: "A pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb!" Of this the purified partake. The kingly and mediatorial government of God ever furnishes the just spirits with increasing admiration of the glory of God. And on earth true Christian comfort is the same. It is of God—it is in God. Property may vanish, friends may fail, health may be destroyed, but God still is immutably glorious, and from his throne still flows the pure river, clear as crystal, imparting life and joy to all that dwell upon its banks. It is a river of mercy, a river of grace, and he that drinketh of its water needs never thirst again for the turbid streams of earthly joy.

5. If, then, the effect of the manifestation of God's mercy and love be to elevate, to ennoble, and to rejoice the heart of man, why should not our minds dwell upon the divine character? We may not, indeed, "find out the Almighty to perfection," but we learn more and more of his glory. He did not chide Moses for his enlarged prayer, nor will he chide us for seeking the utmost knowledge and enjoyment of his grace. Christianity alone offers man knowledge and joy which can perfectly

fill his expansive capacity, and for that knowledge and that grace unceasing effort should be made, and ceaseless prayer offered to the Most High. For this we may come *boldly* to the throne of grace.

6. And if the limit of manifestation of mercy is found in the circumstances of the creature and not in God, who shall attempt to say what glorious enjoyment awaits the celestial citizen? Or who shall fix the limits to the amount of blissful manifestation which may be made to the soul when about to be released from its earthly duties and connections? It was a favorite opinion of many of the Roman and Grecian philosophers and poets, that the prophetic spirit came upon man in his dying moments. Aristotle, Socrates, Pythagoras, and even Homer, make allusions to it, and consider it, in some manner, connected with the soul's immortality; and Xenophon speaks of the soul's appearing god-like in its last moments with the body. What may have given rise to this view among pagan nations we know not; but among the Jews the dying patriarchs had the spirit of prophecy, and Jacob blessed his sons, "worshipping and leaning upon the top of his staff." The future opened upon their vision as earth was receding, and ere its earthly departure the soul seemed as an inhabitant of another world. And is it not an increased manifestation of mercy that makes the "chamber where the good man meets his fate" seem to be "quite on the verge of heaven?" May it not have been such manifestations that raised the martyr's spirit above the power of the flame, and enabled him, with Stephen, to look "up steadfastly into heaven," and to see "the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God?" Is it not this that enables the dying Christian to exclaim, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

7. Does it seem unreasonable that, when life is about to be over, the Deity should withdraw his hand, and let such a view of his glory upon the mind, that the physical frame shall fall, and the unfettered spirit rise to the full enjoyment of beatific love? Is it fanciful to suppose that this was the case with Moses? His was a peculiar death. None but his God was with him.

Behold him, in fancy, as for the last time he addresses Israel. The elders and all the people are around him, with their wives and little ones. He sets before them the law of their God, and exhorts them to obedience. The spirit of prophecy comes upon him, and he tells them of things that should befall them in time to come, gives them his last patriarchal blessing, and then, as if taking his last look, he cries out, "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord?"

He ascends Mount Nebo, toward the top of Pisgah. The veil has been taken from his face for the last time as he goes up to meet the Lord. Are his feelings those of dread or of joy? What should he dread? To be nearer Jehovah is his greatest joy, and he is to receive sublimer and more extensive visions of glory. Is not his prayer still, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory?" He stands upon the mountain's summit, and, as he gazes, there spreads out, in all its richness, and in all its beauty the promised land, even "all the land of Gilead unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea." He looks again, and future scenes are before him. Upon Mount Moriah rises a magnificent building—a splendid temple. Its walls are of massive structure, its columns lofty and imposing, and the riches of Ophir are displayed in its decorations. A wise king is on the throne of David, and millions of people repose in peace and prosperity beneath

his sway. Within the court of the temple are the prescribed sacrifices, and the devout worshippers turn toward the place of the mercy-seat. Again he prays, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." And in the wilderness of Judea, and along the populous courts of Galilee, he beholds wandering "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." At his approach the sick and infirm crowd around. The blind see, the deaf hear, the lepers are cleansed, the dead are brought to life, and the poor hear the gospel of the kingdom. He recognizes him as the "Hope of Israel," a prophet like unto himself in mission, but as the morning star in glory. His soul exults within him, as he sees fulfilled all the types and shadows of the ceremonies instituted by him, and he worships his incarnate Lord. Again he looks, and he stands by a cross; upon it is the King of the Jews. The heavens are hung with blackness, and creation sympathizes with the divine sufferer. Then the agony is over; the earth has quaked; the sun shone forth with his brilliant beams, as the triumphant exclamation was heard, "It is finished!" The graves of the dead were opened, and the veil concealing the holy of holies was rent in twain, opening up a new and living way to the mercy-seat. Again he prays, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." And he beholds an ascended Saviour; the angel flies through the midst of heaven proclaiming the gospel to man; the Gentile hears as well as the Jew; and from the north and south, from the east and west, come flowing around the cross, the people of every tongue and kindred, while glorious light is shining upon the nations of the earth, and all mankind is blessed in the "seed of Abraham." Ecstasy fills his soul, but he realizes that no man can see the face of God and live. His body falls upon the summit, and "the Lord buried him;" while his spirit, amid visions of glory on the

mountain-top, ascends to brighter bliss, and more refulgent glory in the celestial world.

If such were the scene which we have attempted to describe, what bliss would there not be in such a death! And may not the dying Christian, wherever he may be, even deep in the valley of humility, have bright visions and sweet whispers of love in his expiring moments? May not the manifestation of God's mercy soothe his sorrows, and turn his sufferings into joy? "May I die the death of the righteous, and may my last end be like his!"

SERMON XVII.

THE DEAD SPEAK.

BY REV. JOHN L. WALLER.

Editor of the Western Baptist Review.

"And by it, he, being dead, yet speaketh."—Heb. xi. 4.

It is said in the Scriptures, with inimitable beauty and pathos, that "mortal men dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust. They are crushed before the moth. They are destroyed from morning to evening. They perish for ever, without any regarding it. Doth not their excellency that is in them go away? They die even without wisdom." "One dieth in his full strength," says the Patriarch, "being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow. Another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them." "The mighty are exalted for a little while, but are gone, and brought low. They are taken out of the way, as all others, and cut off, as the tops of the ears of corn."

If the appointed time of man upon earth, be the whole of his existence—if there be no more of him, than the few fleeting years which he frets away upon the theatre of this world—then he is the most unmeaning portion of the creation of God. Then he is but an abortion of

nature, adapted to no wise purpose, and destined to no valuable end. Other sentient beings in earth, in ocean, and in air, attain to the perfection of their being. They soon learn all they can learn, and they soon enjoy, in complete fruition, all they are capable of enjoying. The life allotted to them is ample for their every desire, and sufficient for the gratification of their every want.

It is not so with man. This life is too short, and this world too small, for the development of his mental and moral capacities and powers. He is only permitted to catch a glimpse of the glorious dawn of knowledge, when the night of death closes upon his existence. He but begins to think, and act, and speak; when he falls into the grave. On earth, he has no real pleasure, no enduring peace. He is a prey to restlessness, dissatisfaction, and care. He is subjected, perpetually, to anxious, longing desires—to an earnest and ardent solicitude for ease and happiness, which are here denied satisfying aims and objects—to constant and insatiable aspirations for sublime and elevating attainments, and a bright and blissful existence, for which this world presents no promise—all furnishing conclusive evidence, that, if this were his home, and here his exclusive abode, he is endowed with a nature which only mocks him with happiness, deludes him with false hopes, and imparts to him whatever comfort and consolation he feels, by presenting to the hunger and thirst of the soul, but the shadows of food and drink.

Nor is it enough, that such reflections lead us to the irresistible conclusion, that man is immortal. That philosophy but half solves the mystery of our nature, which pauses, satisfied with the deduction, that those mental impulses which push our hopes and fears beyond the finite and the visible, merely point to a hereafter, and

intimate an eternity in the spirit land. And yet, here we are wont to stay the investigation. Usually, the most liberal and enlightened philosophy has been accustomed to regard man as identified with time and its concerns, only during his short sojourn upon earth; and to alledge, that, when he is carried to the bourne of the tomb, his spirit mounts to other and sublimer scenes, and moves, and mingles in an existence, and a society, wholly distinct from those in our world, and with which he retains no connection and no sympathy—his place in this world a vacuum, and every trace of his life here obliterated, or, at best, but retained for a short time, a pleasing, or a mournful recollection, in the minds of kindred and acquaintances.

Admit this reasoning, and grant that man's actions, and his connection with this world, ceased with the brief period of his life, and how profound and impenetrable the darkness which envelopes the design of his existence! The question will be asked, and the philosophy alluded to, can give no answer, Why was he made capable of doing so much in this earth, created for his comfort and his control, and yet denied the opportunity? Was he sent here, merely to survey the beauties, and to contemplate the capacities of the world, and ere he could execute his plans for its enjoyments, or its use, to be summoned to resign this pleasing, anxious being, and sink to dumb forgetfulness? Is his life a mere *ignis fatuus*, emitting a fitful and momentary glare over the quagmires of time, and then extinguished for ever? Are all the projects of man's hopes, and all the results of his unceasing endeavors to form and fashion the things of time, to be dissipated as bubbles, by the rude touch of death; and he be made to stand the dread ordeal of the judgment day, for the empty schemes of a flitting

and evanescent life? The very supposition is stamped with absurdity. It not only makes our nature unmeaning, but places upon our existence here, the impress of caprice and folly.

But enlightened reason, guided in its investigations by the Scriptures, recognizes a nobler and more pleasing pathway, along which the human family were created to walk. With reference to our sublunary existence, "it is not the whole of life to live, nor all of death to die." In a certain and an important sense, the first word ever uttered by man to his fellow, is now heard by all the human family, and will continue to be heard, until this earth and these heavens shall pass away. By faith, Abel, being dead, yet speaketh. His voice has rolled over the great flood; it has been heard by the successive generations of sixty centuries, and now, in sweet and celestial accents, it calls upon all men, every where, to come to the love and service of God. The tombs are not the abodes of silence and inaction, then. They are eloquent in instruction, and mighty in their influences for the weal or the woe of this sin-stricken world. The dead speak: and, as in life, so, and even more, in death, they will contribute their influence in the formation of sentiment and character, until the trump of the archangel shall terminate the day of probation. To prove this position, and to illustrate its consequences, will now be our business.

First. That the dead speak—that the influence of those who now compose the pale nations of the spirit world, is still felt in this life—we argue, in the first place, **FROM THE STRUCTURE OF HUMAN SOCIETY, AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH MEN ARE PLACED BY THE NECESSITIES OF THEIR NATURES.** We enter the world the most helpless and the most ignorant of all animal

creation. For the incipient development of our physical, mental, and moral powers, we are wholly dependent. Our tastes and our pursuits are not, in the beginning, fashioned and selected by ourselves. Our minds, in their germination, are in subjection to others. We are born without language and without thought. We know not how to feed or to clothe ourselves. We are ignorant of our own parents; and all things around us are clad in mystery and night. We are made for society. No man can live to himself. Our very nature abhors solitude. Hence, we come into the world members of the social compact, and under its control. In the cradle, we are subjected to its moulding influences. It is the dictate of nature, as well as of religion, that parents should train their children in the way they would have them go. And, after the parents who directed our infant feet in the paths of life, have sunk into the silence and the shades of the tomb, we continue to feel the power of their influence. The kind and endearing accents of a father's and a mother's solicitude, dwell upon the recollection. Often, on memory's ear, fall their earnest and anxious warnings, when dangers beset our pathway. The recollection of their advice and example, is the beacon to direct our course in the darkness of life's pilgrimage. And these influences, thus derived, we impart to those whom Providence may commit to our charge; and thus, through succeeding generations, our parents, being dead, will speak.

This fact is supported by the history of all men. Even those who have been regarded the exceptions in their generations—who have stood out the most distinguished of their contemporaries—the hero, the statesman, the scholar, and the sage—when critically and thoroughly analyzed, their biographies will disclose the fact, that the

peculiarities of their characters received direction from parental and early influences. "As the twig was bent, the tree inclined." What they learned in secret, they proclaimed from the house-tops. The impressions they received in the hey-day of life, in the quiet and seclusion of the domestic circle, laid the foundations of what constituted their subsequent greatness and renown.

But these early influences do not end here. They are not confined to the domestic circle, in making their impress upon the youthful mind. We must follow the boy from the parental roof to the school-house. He is now under the direction of another instructor. He associates with other children, and, through them, gathers views and sentiments from other parents, unfamiliar and new. By books, too, he is introduced into a strange region of thoughts and ideas. He now walks in paths, to him new and untried; but he finds them worn smooth by the foot-prints of those who preceded him. Other influences now mingle with those coming from home. By these, his first and earlier impressions may be strengthened, modified, or displaced. Divers and conflicting opinions are presented to his mind, and it is his business to elect which shall control him. But, in every event, he is under the guidance of others. And those who direct his course, are but imparting to him what they had, when in his condition, received from those who went before them. In a word, the dead are speaking to him. The rays of light now being shed into his understanding, are emitted by a luminary which first dawned upon the minds of men in remote antiquity; and which has rose higher, and shone brighter, in each succeeding generation of man.

He is now a man. He leaves the halls of science, and engages in the busy scenes of life. Hitherto he has

been in the stream; he is now out on the ocean of terrestrial existence. He is no longer under tutors and governors. He must now meet the tide, and breast the storms of life, his own pilot and his own helmsman. An untried state is before him, and unfamiliar influences are around him. From every direction he meets sentiments in conflict with his own, more strange and startling than any he has hitherto encountered. He may resist, or he may yield to them. The tempest may divert the course, or may founder his bark. In either event, we see, in the man, what we beheld in the boy—an individual under the forming power of society—directed in his opinions, and guided in his course, by the influence of others. Around him are the trees of knowledge, planted and watered by other hands, and he may pluck and eat at his pleasure. Here are the paths of virtue, and there are the paths of vice; and along them are the graves of the mighty multitudes who have gone over them. From these dark and dread abodes, in emphatic tones, are heard voices of warning or of entreaty, telling him the way in which he should go. By one he is wooed to seek wealth, by another to run after fame. Here he is entreated to seek after wisdom; and there he is solicited to follow only pleasures. He listens, and he determines: and thus is led, by the persuasions of the dead, into a career of peace and pleasantness, or of wretchedness and despair.

The Saviour of men, in the establishment of his Church, recognized and used this structure of human society, to convey, through all ages, the knowledge of his religion. By his express ordination, the dead are now his inspired missionaries, to preach to a lost world the plan of salvation. He might have chosen other instrumentalities than those he did select. Even from heaven, his dwelling

place, he might, to all generations, and among all kindreds, and tongues, and people, under the whole heaven, have dispatched a multitude of the heavenly hosts, to proclaim, as to the shepherds of Judea of old, "Peace on earth, and good will to men." But it pleased the Messiah, while dwelling upon earth, to select a few men, his chosen messengers to the world, clothed with miracle, and speaking as they were moved by the Holy Spirit; and they were made the fountain-source of his glorious gospel. From them were to go forth waters of life, to refresh and fertilize the moral wastes of the world. To the Jew and the Gentile, to men in all subsequent time, they were to teach the things belonging to the everlasting kingdom of the Redeemer. Knowing the terrors of the Lord, they were to persuade men. As the ambassadors of God, they were to beseech sinners, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. From these individuals we have received a knowledge of the truth. From them, the glories of redemption have found their way to our understandings. It was by their means, the splendors of the gospel have been shed over so many people, until, in earth and in heaven, unnumbered millions are in the enjoyment of eternal life through their instrumentality.

Yes: the great commission to preach the gospel in all the world, and to every creature, is now being executed by the very men to whom it was originally given, eighteen centuries ago. Those old soldiers of the cross, who, in the infancy of the Christian dispensation, bore the banners of the gospel against spiritual wickedness in high places, are, in this day, the leaders of the Lord's hosts in their march to possess the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens. That voice, which, upon Mars Hill, startled

the inhabitants of classic Athens, in the annunciation of the new and strange doctrine of Jesus and the resurrection, is now heard reverberating through every land, calling upon all men, every where, to repent, because God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world, by that man whom he has ordained.

In short, in whatever aspect we may contemplate man, it will be seen, that from the very necessities of his nature, he is dependent upon the dead for much of the instruction which guides and controls his course. It might be shown that, not only in the matter of religion, but in almost every thing else, the Father of our spirits has ordained that man shall be subject to this law of his existence. It is a constituent element of society for which man is formed. It is no part of our present purpose to inquire into the reason of these things; it is enough that we prove that they exist, that nature and God have established and recognized their wisdom and importance; that, tracing men in every walk of life, however humble, or however exalted, upon every feature of his character, we recognize, in lines to be seen and read of all men, the impress of the dead.

Secondly. That the dead speak, is evident, from **FACTS ATTESTED BY THE OBSERVATION AND EXPERIENCE OF ALL MANKIND.** By careful examination we will find, that the institutions of the world—religious, literary, social, and civil, have derived their peculiar characteristics from those who now repose in the silence of the grave. Let us go to those parts of the earth, where prevail the moral darkness and desolations of superstition, and let us inquire respecting the abominations of idolatry; and we will be told, that no man living can be charged with the crime of their origin. In ages lost in the distance of the past, the idols of the heathen's adoration were made and consecrated.

Men, long since consigned to the stench and rottenness of the charnel house, contrived the ceremonies now observed by the deluded multitude. The priest, who, by artful mummeries, misleads the million, is but one of a succession of cheats and imposters, whose beginning is hid in the remote depths of antiquity. That cloud of folly and superstition which hangs, like the pall of death, over the great majority of the human family, arose out of an ignorance to which the memory of man can assign no epoch; and has gathered intensity of blackness and darkness as it approached loweringly the present age and generation. The degrading rites of pagan worship are lessons which the men of these times have learned from those of the past. The polluted stream, of which the heathens drink, has its source high up in the world's history, and its depth and desolating fury have been augmented by the long lapse of time, down which it has poured its dark torrents.

The fetters of the Moslem faith were forged and fastened full twelve centuries ago in the deserts of Arabia. The debased multitudes, now marshalled under the Crescent—who recognize Mohammed as the prophet of God—who receive, with cringing reverence, the crude and incoherent ravings of an imposter, as the vaticinations of a messenger from the abodes of the blessed; and who, with blind and bigotted fury, are ready to kill, or be killed, in defence of a system of ethics and religion, revolting to every dictate of reason and common sense—are all the more stubborn, unyielding, and fanatical, because the system of falsehood, by which they are led captive, is venerable, in their esteem, by the recollection of centuries; and because it comes to them sanctioned by the approval, and hallowed by the recommendation of mighty multitudes of the dead.

The last of the great facts which constitute the basis of the religion of Christendom, transpired eighteen hundred years ago. Since then, no one has spoken by inspiration. Prophecy, and tongues, and miracles, have ceased. Long since, God uttered his last precept, and instituted his last ordinance. Many and mountain high have rolled the waves of time, sweeping, in ruin and forgetfulness, over cities, and nations, and empires, since the final *amen* was affixed to the book of God's inspiration: and yet, how potent its truths upon the minds of men! How efficient it is still, in bringing men out of darkness and bondage into the light and the liberty of the glorious gospel. The altar fires of the worship inculcated in the Sacred Scriptures, burn as brightly as when first enkindled from on high. Those holy and heavenly truths, to which bowed the hearts of patriarch, prophet, apostle, and holy men of old, have been preserved from generation to generation, and now control the moral being of millions of the human family.

The Christian derives his most important and impressive lessons from the instructions of the dead. The tombs are his best academies. Does he hesitate to forsake the society of kindred and friends, the endearments of home and early associations, to follow and serve the Lord? One, in far off Ur, of the Chaldees, speaks to him words of encouragement, and tells of a "Syrian ready to perish," who, at the command of God, forsook kindred, and country, and home, and wandered, in a distant land, a pilgrim and a stranger, all the days of his life; and, because by faith he did this, he was called the friend of God, and was made the father of many nations, and the heir of the world. When the charms of wealth, and the seductions of greatness and glory allure us from the paths of religion, the great lawgiver of Israel calls to our minds

the remembrance of his example. He spurned the diadem and the throne of the greatest kingdom of that age, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season, because he had respect unto the recompense of reward. When pursued by persecution—when the cause we love seems to be deserted of all men—when almost crushed in heart by the oppressor's wrong, and the proud man's contumely—we are stimulated to stand unmoved by the exhortations of Elijah, who, because he remained pure, amid surrounding corruption, was escorted by angels, in a chariot of fire, home to happiness and heaven; of Daniel, who, because he adhered unwaveringly to the worship of God, when he knew to such worship was attached the doom of death, was saved from the jaws of hungry lions; and of the three Hebrew children, who, because they refused to bow with the great and the noble of earth, at the command of a haughty and imperious monarch, in the adoration of an idol, were preserved unhurt in the fiery furnace, and were sustained in the flames by the companionship of one like unto the Son of Man. In short, every Christian is encompassed by a great cloud of witnesses, the denizens of the pale nations of the dead. A mighty host of these cheer him in his onward march, through temptations and trials, to the land of light, and love, and holiness. They have preceded him in the straight and narrow way. They are familiar with its difficulties, and have triumphed over its obstacles. They are competent, then, to instruct the pilgrim in his journey through the wilderness of sin and suffering to the heavenly Canaan. And when he fails or falters, whose cheering shout so encouraging, as the shout of those who, through many tribulations, have attained everlasting habitations in that glorious city, whose builder and maker is God; who

now enjoy the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

And how distinct, and how deleterious do those who died in unrighteousness, yet speak to the ungodly and the sinner! If those who died in the Lord, like a far distant star of benign aspect, pour cheering and celestial light from the remote past, upon the minds of men; so, in fearful contrast, the wicked, like the terrible storm-cloud, clothed in blackness, and charged with death, sweep, with destructive and desolating fury, over the hearts and the consciences of the ungodly. The heroes and conquerors of other ages, "from Macedonia's mad-man to the Swede,"—the arm of their greatness, long since palsied by death, and the track of their conquests indiscernible by the wasting and oblivious influences of time—from their graves "cry havoc, and bid slip their dogs of war!" The battle shout, which urged the phalanx and the legion of old on to carnage and to conquest, rings yet in the world's ears, and incites yet ardent warriors "to seek the bubble reputation, even at the cannon's mouth." The "warrior's greatness" of the past, did not cease in the oceans of blood which it spilt in the cities and countries it laid in desolation—in the woe and wretchedness which stalked in its train: but, even now, it incites to scenes of slaughter, revels in blood and tears, and rides in ruin over the hopes and happiness, the peace and prosperity of the unoffending millions! From the dead, nations now learn war. The dead are still busy and bustling in the agitation of strife. They still fiercely and furiously blow the clarion bugle of conflict, summoning the chieftains and their clans to the foul and fiendish carnival of embattled hate!

The infidels of the last and the preceding centuries, though dead, yet speak. Their profane sneers and scoffs

at our holy religion; their demon derision of the Son of God; their senseless and shallow cavils at the Sacred Scriptures, are, in this our day, conned and quoted by silly youths and reckless profligates; by the former, because they covet to be esteemed witty; and by the latter, because they are anxious to quiet the clamor of conscience, and to divert the mind's eye from that "fearful looking-for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversary." Vast multitudes now walk in the footsteps of Voltaire, Volney, Paine, and kindred spirits, in the broad road that leads to death. The influence of the wicked, because it panders to the natural disposition of the human family, is ever certain and potent in its operations, is ever readily and rapidly received and acknowledged. Men love darkness rather than light; hence the power, which the shallow pertness and drivelling nonsense of scepticism and infidelity exerts over their minds; hence the ease, with which the infidels, who are dead, still make disciples; and hence the facility, with which they infuse the poison of their sentiments into full many a mind in this generation. They strike a chord which vibrates in unison with the carnal mind; and, as long as such minds exist, so long will earth be rendered hideous by the discordant music which unbelief discourses for the everlasting destruction of our race.

But, turning from the religious and the moral, let us hastily contemplate other institutions, and other influences. Let us look, for a moment, at the literature of the world. Greece and Rome have long since fallen from their high estate. The pride of their greatness, and the pomp of their power, have almost faded from the world's memory; and yet, who has not listened, with wrapt delight, to the songs of their bards? Who has not hung entranced upon the eloquence of their orators? Or been enlightened by

the wisdom of their sages, and improved and instructed by the lessons of their philosophers? The temple of science had its foundations laid by the first man; and, in every subsequent age, it has been builded, added to, and adorned, until it is the beautiful and wonderful structure which we now behold. Who is the scholar, but he whose mind is "rich with the spoils of time?" The very alphabet, and the multiplication table, are confirmations that the dead yet speak. The course of instruction in our colleges and seminaries, in their very design and necessary tendency, are but propositions to form and control the youthful mind, by the sentiments and doctrines of the dead—to subject it to the direction of that stream of influences which swept over all the past generations of men.

The political and civil institutions now existing over the earth, in all their essential features, are the workmanship of the dead. The maxims of politics and law, which now govern the nations, are, in the main, to be assigned an origin and authorship of which the memory of man has no record. This is not only true respecting the states and kingdoms of the old, but also of the new world; not only of the civilized, but of the barbarous portions of mankind. And now, when our own great republic is threatened with civil dissention and overthrow; when fanaticism, political and religious, is calling for the disruption of the Union, even if it should cause fraternal blood to flow like water; its patriotic founders cry from their tombs, in stern rebuke, of the mad and ruinous suggestion. From the hallowed shades of Mount Vernon, from the heights of Bunker Hill, from the plains of Lexington, Camden, Saratoga, and Yorktown—from every battle field of the Revolution, the bones and dust of those who died to achieve our independence, and to secure our national

existence, become eloquent in their entreaties to spare the government—the achievement of their valor, the reflection of their wisdom, and the price of their blood.

Even what we call discoveries and inventions, are but the natural and necessary results of preceding influences. Borne upward and above, by those who have gone before us, we ought to reach higher, and see farther than they. The influence on which we are insisting, and which we ascribe to the dead, comprehends the idea of advancement. It is opposed to quietude and inaction. It is a tree, planted in the beginning of the human race, putting forth new leaves, and twigs, and blossoms, in every generation—springing from a common root, invigorated by the lapse of time, and gathering freshness, and fragrance, and beauty from the ashes of the dead. Hence, those wonderful inventions, which impart a lustre and a peculiarity to modern times, are but the natural heavings of the mighty tide of influences rolling upon the ocean of the past. Thus, Franklin, carefully scanning one discovery after another, in the science of electricity, and standing at length upon the last and the highest, reached forth his hand, and “arrested the forked shafts of Jove, and played with his bolts of thunder.” And thus Morse, led on by the discoveries of Franklin and his successors, has astounded the world, by making the lightning messengers, swift as winged thought, bearing the news to all nations, reckless of space and time. Mankind must have stood still, and rolled back the torrent of influences sweeping down the past, if some one had not discovered the art of printing when it was. So, also of the other thousand and one discoveries and inventions of modern times. As the world grows older, men ought to be wiser. New mansions of light, in the halls of science and art, are constantly being

unfolded. Those behind us push us to the threshold, and bid us enter; and it is this entering which makes up the marvels of our age.

Nor must we conclude that it is only the favored few—the great and illustrious—who have made their impress upon following generations. Not merely the majestic rivers pouring their floods into its channel, but the myriad babbling fountains and purling brooks, winding their unpretending courses every where, from the peaks of the Rocky Mountains to those of the Alleghanies, lend assistance in forming the mighty and resistless current of the Mississippi. The smallest particle of matter upon this globe of ours, as philosophy bears witness, exerts an influence upon the largest and most distant orb, rolling in the immensity of creation. The smallest ray of light lends its agency to that flood of refulgence constantly rolling its tides of ceaseless and exhaustless splendor over the unmeasured fields of space. The ocean is composed of drops of water. The smallest grain of sand contributes its proportion to the bulk of this “great globe itself.” So the most obscure individual—“unknown to fortune or to fame”—living in the most remote past—may, nay, *must* have assisted in swelling the stream of influences now pouring its resistless torrents over the intellectual and moral estates of mankind. The formation of men’s characters, whatever their position by birth or fortune, is essentially by the same process. To the fireside—to the solitude and seclusion of the social circle—we must look, as before intimated, for much of that early impress which has given cast and tone to the individual throughout his life. Examine this fact, in its connection and consequences, and any one may readily perceive, how the obscure and the humble, not less than those who have received the posthumous acclaim of the million, have been instrumental

in moulding the present condition of mankind. Parents, brothers and sisters, nurses, school companions—all the intimate and cherished associations of early life, when the mind is easily impressed, and the character is most flexible—have done most in preparing for their careers, even those who have shared most largely in the world's admiration and esteem. And, besides, all men are identified with each other. God has made of one blood all the nations of the earth. We are all portions of one great family. We are thus indissolubly linked to the past, the present, and the future. By tracing his genealogy back a few centuries, a man may readily perceive that his ancestors were the whole population of the earth! and that, consequently, by hereditary descent, he derives an influence from all!

What a sublime lesson to be derived from this view of the subject! We look back, and find that all of mankind, from the least to the greatest, who have preceded us, have contributed to the moral, intellectual, civil, and religious state of things which surround us in this life. The poor and the proud, the mean and the mighty, the humble and the haughty, of far removed generations, have been uttering lessons of warning and encouragement to us and our children. The oath of the blackguard, that shocked the moral sense of some quiet and forgotten village, and excited the admiration and imitation of certain truant school-boys a thousand ages ago, still grates in tones of harsh thunder upon the world's ear. That idle word, which the heedless individual uttered to a few giddy companions, and which he supposed was but for a moment, has come on over many generations of men; and the reverberations of silly laughter which it excites, is now heard throughout the moral universe. Those words of comfort and consolation which, in the hovels of the poor,

soothed the aching heart of want and wretchedness, fall in sweetest cadence upon us now. The precepts of the good, the counsels of the wise, the incitements of the ambitious, the blasphemies of the impious, uttered in all ages, are yet heard—"their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world." The pedagogue, who, hundreds of years by-gone, "taught the young idea how to shoot"—the mother, directing the infant steps of her child in the paths of virtue—the philosopher, leading his disciples up the steep of knowledge—the minister of the gospel, pointing to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world—were all but contributing to swell the stream of influences, the first gushing of whose springhead was when "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," at the completion of creation; and which is destined to swell and sweep along the earth, until it disembogues in the ocean of eternity at the last day. Of every man who now sleeps in the dust of the earth, it may as truly be said as of Abel, "He being dead, yet speaketh." From the silence of the spirit land, he calls upon men to walk in the paths of virtue, or of vice—he invites to the bright and glorious abodes of eternal joys, or else tempts to the dark domains of everlasting and keen despair.

In fine, on this point—divest us, as individuals, as members of society, and as nations, of what we have learned from the dead—extinguish within us the sentiments and sympathies imparted by their influence—and we would be without religion, without law, without knowledge, and beneath the condition of the most degraded, mean, and miserable community known to exist upon earth. The world of mankind now existing, must recognize all past generations as their parents, instructors, and guides, training them for the paths in

which they would have them to go, and making them all that they are in intellect, morals, and religion.

3. The last argument we shall adduce in support of the position that the dead speak, will be derived from **THE SCRIPTURES**. Time would fail us, to refer to a hundredth part of the examples which go to illustrate and establish this doctrine. We shall let it suffice to allude merely to a few, as a fair specimen of the whole. Indeed, we have already, to a considerable extent, anticipated this part of our subject. Not only Abel, but of Cain, it is substantially said in the Scriptures, "He being dead, yet speaketh." We are warned by the apostle, not to do "as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother, because his own works were evil, and his brother's good." And another apostle, speaking of certain persons in his day, exclaims, "Woe unto them! for they *have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.*" We are taught, too, that Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, *are set forth for an example*, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." And John heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and *their works do follow them.*" And many and melancholy are the records in the sacred chronicles, respecting the kings of Israel and of Judah, who "walked in all the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities." The evil influences of this wicked monarch were felt in Israel, until God, in his displeasure, delivered them into the hands of their enemies; aye, are even felt now, as may be seen

in the present condition of the once favored nation of heaven, scattered and peeled over the whole earth, a proverb and a bye-word among all people. It is written of those nations who were placed in the cities of Samaria, "So these nations feared the Lord, and served their graven images, both their children and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day."

But a most potent, if not a resistless argument, may be derived in support of posthumous influences, from the teachings of the Scriptures respecting the judgment day—a specific day at the conclusion of the affairs of this world, when the living and the dead must stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and be judged according to the deeds done in the body. But let us see what the Scriptures say of this awful and tremendous day: "Verily, I say unto you," was the language of the Saviour to the Jews, "it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, *in the day of judgment*, than for that city." "But I say unto you, [Chorazin and Bethsaida,] it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, *at the day of judgment*, than for you." "I say unto you, [Capernaum,] that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, *in the day of judgment*, than for thee." "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here. The Queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." Paul testified to the Athenians, that God "now commandeth all men every where to repent; because he

hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." The same apostle, writing to the Romans, says, "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ; for it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." So then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God." To the Corinthians, he writes, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Says the apostle Peter, of this day, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." But we need not quote more. These passages sufficiently describe the judgment day.

The flippant universalist, is wont to descant, in affected horror, at the monstrosity of a procedure which consigns to perpetual punishment, an individual, for the transactions of a life as evanescent as the morning vapor and the early dew! And the pert infidel, jeeringly inquires into the wisdom and equity of a jurisprudence, which punishes a man first, and then gives him a hearing—which assigns him his portion at death, and brings him to trial at the judgment day! But these silly cavils are seen to be the mere bubbles of nonsense, when considered in the light of the facts and deductions already established.

Man's is no brief career, and "no pent up Utica confines his powers." Time is his duration, and the world, from its beginning to its dissolution, is the theatre of his action. The influences under which we have shown him to exist, and by which he is fashioned and formed, connect him with the past, and identify him with the present and the future. They do not destroy his moral agency. They make him no mere machine. They address themselves to him as a rational being, and it is his business to reason, and determine upon their reception or rejection. He is at liberty to listen to the lessons of the good, or to yield to the seductions of the ungodly; and which ever course he may adopt, has the sanction of his will. To whatever influence he submits, it becomes a part of his being, and makes him one of the past. He becomes a portion of those who have gone before him, when their sentiments and sympathies constitute his intellectual and moral being. Thus he becomes linked with man from the foundation of the world. The Apostle enforces this sentiment with great power: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and *so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*" It is a silly conceit, then—the flitting and fitful jack-o'-lantern of murky ignorance—to ascribe to the words and the actions of men a short and transitory influence. It is wisely decreed, that, for every idle word man shall be called into judgment. Such words are moral poison, of the most deadly and polluting nature, dealt out to mankind. The actions of no man will cease, until the day of probation shall close—until this earth and these heavens pass away. So long as men may be influenced to do good or evil, just so long must every man be acting upon the intellectual and moral condition of the world. A righteous decision cannot, therefore, be passed upon

his actions, until the consummation of all things. He must cease to injure or to benefit his fellow men, before he can be judged according to the deeds done in the body. This cannot take place, as we have demonstrated, until the affairs of this world are closed. The knell of time, then, is the appropriate signal to summon him to the judgment seat of Christ. Then, and not till then, will man cease to speak to man for his weal or his woe.

That will be a fearful reckoning day. The living and the dead will stand before God. The secrets of all hearts will then be disclosed, and the consequences of every man's deeds will then be made manifest. Each man will then see the tremendous effect of what he had fondly dreamed was a short and eventless career in the earth. He will then learn how mighty and how multitudinous were his actions. He will meet at the judgment, a great company whom he has persuaded to walk in the paths of virtue or of vice. The vast majority of them he will then see for the first time. They had heard his voice from the tombs, and were induced to follow in the ways he commended. On that dread day, he will discover, for the first time, the track of desolation, or else the pathway of loveliness and beauty, which he has made in the hearts of untold myriads. He may then discover, that his words, idly or seriously uttered—caught up and echoed—ran, and were reverberated in the ears of men, until their sound was silenced by the trump which startled him from the slumbers of the grave. Then every man's work will have been finished. The world, over which we were given dominion, will then have passed away—its concerns all closed—and the final decision upon the conduct of those who controlled its affairs, will then be entered upon the records of eternity, by the Judge of the quick and the dead.

THE DEAD SPEAK! How sublime, how instructive, and how dreadful the thought! It invests man with an existence in earth, worthy of his intellectual and moral being. It regards him as an agent, for weal or for woe, more powerful than any agency ascribed to angels; and this, to some extent, may solve the mystery, that, through the Redeemer, he is presented with a kingdom and crown more glorious than those possessed by the angelic host—that he may become an heir of God, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ. And how drivelling the cavil of scepticism, which sneers at the magnitude of redemption, because man is too insignificant to justify so much attention from the Sovereign of immensity! We have shown, that man is no pigmy being; and that, so far as we know, he may prove to be the noblest of the workmanship of the Almighty. At least, he is mighty, in ability, for good or for evil.

The *dead speak*! Then, how circumspect ought we to be in our words and actions! What enduring and tremendous consequences hang upon all we say and do! We are operating, not only upon those around us, and in the midst of whom we act and move, but upon unborn millions, and until the end of time; all of whom we have to meet in the judgment. We live in a favored age; we walk in the light of sixty centuries; we enjoy opportunities which no preceding generation ever enjoyed. On every hand, and by unnumbered instrumentalities, we are summoned to engage in works of beneficence, calculated to shed blessings upon the present, and all subsequent times. Alas! the immense majority of our fellow men now upon earth, are using the advantages committed to their charge, merely to subserve the interests of time and sense! These will rise in the judgment and condemn them. If we would

be wise, let us dedicate ourselves, and all that we have, to the service of God.

Yes, *the dead speak!* Every individual, thrown into the ocean of time, creates a wave that will widen and spread until it breaks upon the shores of the eternal world, at the last day. Time is a harp. The strings at one end are fastened to this world, and, at the other, to the throne of the judgment. Every man who comes into the world, strikes a string, producing tones of moral music, such as angels use; or else, horrible discord, grating like harsh thunder upon the ears of all mankind, until hushed by the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, proclaiming that time shall be no more. May ours be the blessedness of those "who die in the Lord."

SERMON XVIII.

REDEMPTION OF HUMAN CHARACTER.

BY REV. THOMAS H. STOCKTON.

Of the Protestant Methodist Church, Baltimore.

“The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”—
Mark i. 1.

THERE is no subject, in regard to which philosophers seem to be so much constrained into agreement, as they are in relation to the identity of the *will* and *the me*; or, of *voluntary power* and *essential personality*. “This power, or energy,” says Mr. Morell, “which we variously call the will, the acting and knowing principle, or *the me*.” And again: “The most purely abstract idea, perhaps, which we can take of man is, that he is a *force* or a *power*, sent into the universe to act its part on the stage of being.” And again: “*Will, activity, power of causation*,”—express—“the most intimate nature of the soul itself.” In like manner, he represents others: Instance Coleridge. “The part of our constitution, however, which Coleridge dwells upon with the greatest delight, is *the will*.” “He recognized in every man a WILL, a spiritual force, (entirely distinct from his animal nature,) given to him by God, to regulate his higher life. This will, accordingly, he regarded as the source of moral obligation, the germ of our religious being, the link by which our earthly nature is united to those higher

natures, which evince a pure spontaneity for eternal holiness and love." Instance, also, M. Maine de Biran. "The great fact of consciousness which M. Maine de Biran developed with so much perseverance, was that of the *activity* of the human mind—the power of the *will*." "He fully establishes the doctrine, that the soul is a *cause*, a force, an active principle; and that the phenomena of consciousness can never be explained until we clearly apprehend the *voluntary* nature of its thoughts and impulses." "This term *will*, we now use as virtually synonymous with self." "The notions of *cause*, of *will*, of *self*, we find to be fundamentally the same." "The will is the foundation of personality—my will is virtually myself." Instance, also, M. Cousin. "The whole ground-work of our activity is in the will; and, it is the will which peculiarly constitutes our distinct personality." "It is the will alone—which makes us free agents. "This *will*—is, in a peculiar sense, *the man himself*." Instance one more: M. Jouffroy. "The *personal faculty*, or the supreme power of taking possession of ourselves, and of our capacities, and of controlling them; this faculty is known by the name of liberty, or will, which, however, designates it but imperfectly."

So much for the philosophers. The last remark, that the name *will*, designates the personal faculty but *imperfectly*, is, after all, correct; and ought to be remembered. That there is a distinction between *the me* and *the will*, is plain: and a most important distinction. The will, is *not* the me; but, *of* the me: not the *conscious substance*; but, the *chief power of* this substance. The substance is one thing, the consciousness of the substance, another; and the power of the will, as one among many powers, another. I may take an arrow from the target; go back to the bow whence it was shot—to the left hand, which

held the bow—to the right hand, which drew the string—to the eye, which measured the distance—to the brain, which controlled the eye—to every organ and function of the anatomical and physiological systems, as far as they were involved in the act: I may rise to the spiritual system, and explore its connections with this deed—the plans of the intellect—the impulses of the emotions—and the determinations of the will: but, after all, something will remain unascertained. The true agent is not thus discovered. To show this the more clearly, I may make the case my own, and describe the whole series of actions as the employment of the instrumentalities of my essential self. It was *my* target, that received the arrow; *my* arrow, that pierced the target; *my* bow, that sped the arrow; *my* left hand, that held the bow; *my* right hand, that drew the string; *my* eye, that measured the distance; *my* brain, that controlled the eye; *my* intellect, that enlightened the cerebrum; *my* emotions, that stimulated the cerebellum; and *my* will, that aroused the emotions and directed the intellect. Do you not perceive, that the agent is as completely hidden, as at first? Whether natural or spiritual, these instrumentalities are all *mine*—not *me*: the *possessions* of the *me*—not the *me* *itself*. Who shot the arrow? *I* shot it! See that! *That* tells the whole story—from beginning to end. *I* shot it! See that! Was it not quick as lightning? Could you catch it? You may catch the lightning: but this *I*—none but God can catch! *I—will!* What can be more evident, than that the *I* is the *agent*; and the *will*, the *action*! Does the *will*—will? or, do *I* will? If I say—I see: I hear: I speak: I act: I think: I feel:—is that the same thing as saying, that *I* and these *acts* are *identical*? Is there not infinitely more, in the *I*, than in the *act*? So is it in relation to the will. If I say—*I will*: I come *next*

to the *I*—for *willing*, certainly, is the inmost act of the *being* that wills : but, after all, there is an essential and unchangeable difference between the *being*, and the *act* of the being : or between even the being, and the *power* of the act.

Here, then, ontology is again at fault. The philosophy of existence cannot tell what exists : the science of what is, does not know what is. It is one thing to say, for thousands of years, "*Know thyself*:" and another, and much more difficult thing, to show any one *how* to know himself. "Canst thou, by searching, find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." Even so, comparatively limited and superficial as our own nature is, it may be inquired, with almost equal hopelessness, "Canst thou, by searching, find out "man?" "canst thou find out" thy brother, or thyself, "unto perfection?" This knowledge, too, is "high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."

What then? Who can explain the reason of this mysteriousness of our nature? Does not God know himself? And if so, why cannot man, who was created in the image and likeness of God, know himself? I answer. *In my opinion*—as it seems proper that a person, acting on the principles of the Bible and private judgment, should always mean, and often say—great as is the mystery of our nature, there is no mystery in the reason of the mystery.

The inquiry suggests the explanation. Man was, indeed, created in the image of God : but, he has lost this image, and it is because of this loss that he does not know

himself, and cannot know himself. Rub off the image from a coin, or medal, and who can understand its design? But something must be said, more literal and appropriate than this. What then? Self-knowledge is part of the Divine image. The loss of the Divine image, therefore, includes the loss of self-knowledge. Can any thing be plainer? Alas! for man! Before his fall, he knew God; knew nature; knew himself: in a word, knew all *good*. But his paradise contained a tree, with which was connected the knowledge of *evil*, as well as good: and he partook of its fruit. Then the influx of evil darkened the perception of good; and, instead of becoming wiser and more like God, he became a fool; assumed the semblance of the devil; grew utterly ignorant of God, nature, and himself; and retained only the knowledge of evil. This is history, not fiction: fact, not fancy: the only trustworthy interpretation of the course and condition of the world.

In the present age, beyond all precedent, man boasts of his knowledge. But what, after all, does he know? that is, in comparison with what he might know. Dr. Chalmers distrusted Mr. Morell's ontology, representing it as relating to bare existences, or entities. Mr. Morell replied, that "Ontology has nothing to do with *bare undetermined existence*." But it has to do with being in its fundamental determinations and necessary laws, so far as they can be ascertained. It strives to look beneath phenomena, as mere matters of observation and deduction. But it never attempts to view bare undetermined existence, for the very sufficient reason, that no such existence has a being out of our abstractions." Very well. This is a tolerably fair answer. But it might be inquired of Mr. Morell—granting that there is no bare existence, and that, therefore, ontology has nothing to do with bare existence—what is the amount of its instruction

in relation to the subjects which it has something to do with? What does it teach, in relation to the "fundamental determinations and necessary laws" of "being"—to which you allude? "I said"—methinks he replies—"so far as they can be ascertained." True—so you did: but how far is that? What is the range of being? and what the extent of the discovery of its determination and laws? Alas for ontology, in this, as in other connections! But allow me another inquiry. Granting that ontology very properly "strives to look beneath phenomena, as mere matters of observation and induction"—how large is the circle of phenomena, beneath which it strives to look? Alas for ontology—in this, also, as in other connections! The simple truth is, that the circles of "being" and "phenomena," open to human exploration, at present, are mere points, in comparison with the infinite expansions of both which are utterly inaccessible. What is the accessible material universe, in comparison with the inaccessible? And what is the accessible spiritual universe, in comparison with the inaccessible? And even within the limits of the parts that are accessible, how little is known?—how little, of matter? how little, of spirit? What are the "fundamental determinations and necessary laws" even of the human constitution? How far "beneath" even *its* "phenomena, as mere matters of observation and induction," can ontology "look,"—let it "strive" as long and earnestly as it may? Alas! notwithstanding all the boasts of the age, we are thus brought back to the inexplicable mystery even of our own nature!

In this condition, we have no resource but the Bible. Let us, therefore, return to the Bible. What do we find here? This is not the place for a full answer. Enough, for the purpose, may be said in a few words. Begin at

the beginning. You see man, in communion with God: face to face, and voice to voice. Is that possible now? "Thou canst not see my face," said the Lord, to Moses, "for there shall no man see me, and live." Again, you see man, reading all natural forms, at first sight, with unerring understanding: bestowing names, which the Creator saw no reason to change, on all the beasts of the field, and all the fowls of the air. Where is this natural science, now? Again, you hear man exclaiming, at the vision of woman, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." Did he stop there? Not so: witness his instant foresight. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Where is such foresight now? In these three instances, you see the illustration of what was affirmed before, that, in the beginning, man knew God, knew nature, and knew himself.

Come down, from the beginning, to the time of Christ. All the way, you are oppressed by the utter ignorance of the whole world—except in one narrow line. In that line, first patriarchal and then national, you notice the continuance of Divine communications; by oracles, by visions, by inspirations, and by angels—by *the* angel, pre-eminently, and by inferior angels, in common. You find servants, shepherds, and husbandmen; priests, kings, and prophets; all giving proof of spiritual recognitions, of which we are entirely unconscious. Take, for example, the exceedingly impressive case of Elisha and his servant. Elisha was as troublesome to the king of Syria; as Demosthenes became to Philip of Macedon. So the king sent "horses and chariots, and a great host," to Dothan, to capture this one man; "and they came by night, and

compassed the city about. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." Doubtless the servant marvelled at this reply; and, perhaps, looked round about the hill, or mountain, on which the little citadel stood, to see where these multitudes of allies were gathered. To him, however, there was no presence, save that of the terrible foes. How different were the spiritual states of the prophet and his servant! To the one, only one world was open: to the other, two worlds were equally open. To the prophet, it may be, the spiritual world was as familiar as the natural; but his servant had lived in the natural world alone. The prophet, it may be, could close or open his spiritual sight, as easily as his natural sight; and look, at pleasure, on the spiritual world alone, or the natural world alone, or both worlds at once; or cease to look on either. The servant, though he did not generally need such a privilege, might be elevated into its enjoyment for that occasion; and, therefore, it is recorded, that "Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see." Perhaps the servant thought that a vain prayer: that his eyes were already open, and that he saw quite as well as his master, if not better. But, "the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, *the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha!*"—that is, full of angels: for, in the language of the Psalmist, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place." The history proceeds: "And when they"—the Syrians—

"came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the Lord, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness." They were so smitten: led into Samaria: had their eyes opened again: found *themselves* captured: but received hospitable treatment, and were sent back to their master, who was happy to escape from a land so strangely defended.

Leaving the Old Dispensation for the New, how wonderfully the intimations multiply, that man has, indeed, lost self-knowledge: that he scarcely dreams of the originally designed capabilities of his constitution: and that it is utterly impossible for ontology, or any other natural science, to fathom these mysteries—mysteries which even death itself cannot fully explain, but many of which must be reserved, for perfect solution, until the final and consummate felicities of the resurrection. The history of the Redeemer teems with such intimations: as, in connection with his birth: his baptism: his forty days fast: his temptation: his ministry: his miracles: his spiritual discernment: his natural dominion: his perfect control of his own physical instrumentality—appearing and disappearing, at pleasure: the transfiguration—the walking on the water—the rising to the sky: these, and many other instances. And so is the history of the apostles and evangelists, likewise, rich in such suggestions: as in regard, particularly, to the disclosures made to Stephen, Peter, Paul, and John. In a word, from the very first sparkling of John the Baptist, as the morning star of the day of New Testament Revelation, to the very latest sparkling of John the Evangelist, as the evening star of the same day—the spiritual world excelling the natural: and, more especially, from the sunrise beauty of Bethlehem to the sunset magnificence of Patmos—from the entrance of Christ and his angels, in the Gospels, to the withdrawal

of Christ and his angels, from the Apocalypse: the whole glory, of the sublime transit, was designed, by the illustration of the great themes of life and immortality, to assure man of the grandeur of his constitution, and persuade him to due care of its incomparable interests: an illustration, hiding, with excess of splendor, all preceding lights; making every thing, upon the surface of humanity, as clear as noon; and encouraging researches below the surface, far more profound, to say the least of them, than were ever made before.

And what now? Do I seem to have forgotten the point whence I started? This may be the seeming: but it is far from the reality. I have not forgotten it: no, not for a moment. All I have said, has been for the sake of a more useful return to it. I have tried to shorten the course: but could not. Now it is out: and I find myself where I wished to be.

See! The philosophers regard the *will*, and the *me*—as identical. That, as I have shown, is an *error*. They are *not* identical. *How* did the philosophers fall into this error? See! Ontology—the *first* philosophy—the science of *existence*—the explorer of what *is*—ambitious to understand the human constitution; and deciding upon the will, as its inmost essence; has studied the will, as the true exponent of the constitution—satisfied itself with the results of this study—and proclaimed them to the world, as, if not a perfect account of the constitution, at any rate, a vastly better account than any previously given. What nonsense! for, first, the Bible intimations are infinitely superior! What nonsense! for, secondly—and this is the great fact which I have been all this while approaching—the WILL is *not*, specially and properly, the exponent of the CONSTITUTION *at all*: but, of the CHARACTER! The WILL *determines*, not CONSTITUTION, but CHARACTER! The

study of the WILL is not the study of CONSTITUTION, but of CHARACTER! The *phenomena* of the WILL are not phenomena of CONSTITUTION, but of CHARACTER! The FIRST CAUSES which lie *back* of the WILL, and prompt its *volitions*, are not elements of CONSTITUTION, but of CHARACTER! The WILL, at most, is only an EXECUTIVE ENERGY: there is a JUDICIAL ENERGY behind it, and a LEGISLATIVE ENERGY behind that, and an ALL-CONTROLLING SOVEREIGNTY behind that! I, will! Very well. But what comes *between* the I and the will? In other words, *why* do I will? Who can tell that? Let me pass on a little farther: and, perhaps, the answer will appear. See! *how* do I will? There are only two answers. Let us try them both. *First*, I will to DO RIGHT. But, *why* do I *thus* will? Because, the JUDICIAL ENERGY of CONSCIENCE, which is *behind* the WILL, decides in favor of the right and demands the execution of its decree. But *why* does CONSCIENCE thus act? Because the LEGISLATIVE ENERGY of LOVE, the LAW OF RIGHT, which is *behind* the CONSCIENCE, binds, or obliges, it so to act. But, *why* does the LAW OF LOVE thus bind, or oblige, the CONSCIENCE? Because the ALL-CONTROLLING SOVEREIGNTY of God is pleased to distinguish this INMOST AND PUREST PRINCIPLE OF LIFE with this SECONDARY SOVEREIGNTY—the fairest symbol of His own! But, *why* is God pleased to confer this distinction on this principle? Because, “God is LOVE!” But, *why* is God LOVE? No one knows: but, *because* He is so, immensity and eternity are full of hallelujahs! Now, therefore, let us try the *second* answer: I will to DO WRONG. But, *why* do I *thus* will? Because the JUDICIAL ENERGY of CONSCIENCE, bribed or enfeebled, consents or yields to the wrong. But, *why* does CONSCIENCE thus act? Because the LEGISLATIVE ENERGY of SELFISHNESS, or HATRED—the LAW OF WRONG—binds,

or, obliges, it so to act. But, *why* does the LAW OF SELFISHNESS, or, the LAW OF HATRED—which are the same, as selfishness, in relation to ourselves; is hatred, in relation to others: and hatred, in relation to others; is selfishness, in relation to ourselves—thus bind or oblige, the CONSCIENCE? Because the ALL-CONTROLLING SOVEREIGNTY of the *Devil*—a deceptive and destructive SOVEREIGNTY—delegates this majesty unto it, as the most awful image of his own: for, as our Saviour describes him, he is the father of liars, and the father of murderers; the first liar, and the first murderer; a liar from the beginning, and a murderer from the beginning: or, as John gives it, “He that committeth *sin* is of the devil; for the devil *sinneth* from the beginning.” But, thank God! as he immediately adds, “For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that he might *destroy* the works of the devil.”

Now, let us consider the definition of human character. It is man's VOLUNTARY LIFE: the *form* and *action* of his *will*: the *continuous current* of *volition* and *habit*. That is, the WILL, as the EXECUTIVE ENERGY, acting *for* the MORAL POWERS behind it; and *with* the EMOTIONAL, INTELLECTUAL, and PHYSICAL INSTRUMENTALITIES before it; *determines*, at once, the *essential principle* and *formal manifestation* of the man's CHARACTER—and, of course, his relation to good or evil—his allegiance to God or the devil.

What now? If the CHARACTER be wrong—all is wrong. If the CHARACTER be perverted, so as to correspond with the devil's character: the CONDITION will correspond with the devil's condition—and the CONSTITUTION will correspond with the devil's constitution. If this perversion be persisted in, for want of the means of redemption, or in opposition to the means of redemption,

man, ultimately, will cease to be man—lose the last remembrance of the Divine likeness—and become, to all intents and purposes, a devil.

Come we, then, to the *history* of human character: that is—come we, to the voluntary life of humanity: come we, to the form and action of the human will: come we, to the continuous current of human volition and habit. What do the records of the world report, in these connections? What does the Bible record—the oldest and best in the world—report? Alas! *all* records are *alike* here! There is no literature extant, either sacred or profane, that asserts the correspondency of the character of man with the character of God. There is no literature extant, either sacred or profane, that denies—nay, that does not demonstrate—the correspondency of the character of man with the character of the devil. We live in a world, in which every man is forced to blush for his own character; and every generation, to blush for its own character; and both the man and the generation, to blush for the character of our whole ancestry. We live in a world, in which our constitution is half-obsured; and our condition half-ruined; because our character is utterly perverted. We live in a world, in which, apart from the reliefs toward which I am tending, the past is a horrible memory; the present, a more horrible experience; and the future, a most horrible foreboding. We live in a world, in which, notwithstanding the peerless dignity and priceless value of our existence, as originally designed; even infinite love has been constrained to “repent” and “grieve,” for our creation, and to sanction the awful utterance—“Good were it for that man, if he had never been born.”

I wonder not, that the natural universe, seems, in some aspects of it, so hostile, or, at least, repulsive, toward us.

I wonder not, that the earth is so torn and riven; so divided and disfigured; so sanded, and flooded, and blighted, and blasted; so changeable in its climates; so capricious in its yieldings; so distracted with accidents; so crowded with diseases; so afflicted with bereavements; so white with tombs; so wet with tears; so wild with wailing; and, sometimes, so dumb with despair! I wonder not, that thou, O moon!—art so pale! *Thy* sphere is *nearest* to our own. I wonder not, that thou, O sun!—dost so often veil thy face, and darken the sky, with the thick cloud! Thine eye is bright, and our iniquities are naked. I wonder not, that ye, O stars! stand so far aloof, and yet tremble in the distance! It is, indeed, a fearful vision. Neither do I wonder, that the spiritual universe is so completely concealed from us. I do not wonder, that the saints return not, even to their dearest friends. I do not wonder that the angels show not a wing, and sing not a song, any more. I do not wonder, that the Spirit of God rushes in with the wind, and flashes forth in the fire, no more. I do not wonder, that the Son of God, who once descended from the mountain, trusted himself to the waves, and breasted the storm of the midnight sea, that he might rejoin his disciples—now remains, so long invisible, in the serene heavens, as though he had ceased to care for us, or even to think of us. And, finally, I do not wonder, that God himself, without whose notice, it is said, not even a sparrow can fall to the ground, and by whom, it is affirmed, even the very hairs of our heads are all numbered—nevertheless, as though he were a God, not nigh at hand, but, afar off: continues, from age to age, so unsearchable, motionless, and still.

Rather, I cannot but wonder, that God has been so long-suffering in the allowance of sin; so patiently

inventive of countless restraints of sin; and so forbearing in the revelation of wrath from heaven, in punishment of sin. Had it not been for his presiding and pitying goodness—long, long ago, men would have out-fiended the fiend of fiends, and earth would have out-helled the hell of hells.

How shall we account for the compassion of God, in relation to our race? Is it possible to account for it, except by the fact that the case was not hopeless?

Perhaps ten years ago, or more, in a journey over the mountains, the stage stopped at a tavern, and I, taking up a periodical on the table, saw an article entitled—"THE WISDOM OF GOD IN THE PERMISSION OF SIN." I had no time to read the article: but, somehow, the title of it entered into my soul, and has ever since remained there. I doubt whether eternity will erase it. The soul has a heaven of its own, where it lays up treasures, that neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal. It was not so much the *form* of the title, however, as its *spirit*, that arrested my attention, and turned the tide of thought. My dear old grandfather, once a saint on earth, and now a saint in heaven, taught me not to allow the use of that word *permission*, in such connections. "God does not *permit* sin," said he, "he only suffers it." Hence, had he written on the subject, he would have entitled his essay, "The Wisdom of God in the *Sufferance* of Sin"—and I think this would be better. But, the fact—the great fact—the infinitely impressive fact, that *sin exists*, that God *suffers* it to exist, and that it is *wise* for him to suffer it, *has* been wise, from the beginning; *is* wise, yet; and *will* be wise, unto the end; *this* is the all-commanding topic.

Again, therefore, I inquire—why was it *wise* for God to *suffer* the *existence* and *continuance* of *sin*? And again, I

reply,—certainly, to say the very least that can be said of it, it was because the case was not hopeless.

Now, for the PRINCIPLES OF NEED AND SUPPLY. They, under God, are the grand interpreters of our holy religion, as will be found, by his blessing, hereafter, in all relations—doctrinal, practical, and formal; personal and social.

A *great need* existed. What was it? The redemption of human character. From what did the human character need to be redeemed? From sin. What is sin? The opposition of human will to the will of God. What is redemption from sin? The reconciliation of the human will to the will of God. This, then, was the need.

Now, could this need be *supplied*? Might this want be met? If not, it could not be wise to suffer the continuance of the evil. If it could, the evil might be restrained and endured, in hope.

The work to be effected was, in some sense, the hardest work in the universe. It would seem that it ought to be, and might be, the easiest: but it has proved the hardest. It is hard even to God: harder than any other. It is an easy thing for him, in the material universe, to create, change, or destroy. It is an easy thing for him, in the spiritual universe, to do the same—*except*, as it relates to the *will*. That, too, he creates, and can destroy. Not only so, but, doubtless, he can *change* it—change it by *force*, by *violence*. But, if *so* changed, it would lose its proper character: and this result would be contrary to God's design. The only way in which it can be properly changed, is, by *persuasion*. God himself, it appears, can change it properly only in this way. If this method fail all hope is gone.

What then? Could the *need* be *supplied*? Could any PERSUASIVE INFLUENCE be found, in God or nature, that

would change the *will* of man? Creation stood, hopeless. Providence stood, hopeless. The divine perfections could not accomplish the purpose, through these organs. And there lay the human constitution, in sudden obscurity, utterly hopeless. And there lay the human condition, in sudden wretchedness, utterly hopeless. All things waited, and could do nothing but wait, for the great question to be decided, in relation to human character, in relation to man's voluntary life, the form and action of his will, the continuous current of his volition and habit. Could his CHARACTER be REDEEMED? Could his will be RECONCILED to the will of God?

If so, all would be well. If so, *sin*, terrible as it is, might, for a time, at least, be *tolerated*, *restrained*, and *tolerated*. If the *character* could be redeemed from its sinfulness, the *condition* might be redeemed from its wretchedness, and the *constitution* be redeemed from its obscurity. If the *character* could be redeemed—Redemption would cry to Providence: "All hail! Be of good cheer!"—and Providence would cry to creation: "All hail! Be of good cheer!"—and Providence, no longer hopeless, would renew its bounty, in part, at once, and promise to empty its horn at last, and fill again, and empty again, for ever and ever, as at first intended: and creation, no longer hopeless, would renew its beauty, in part, at once, and promise to glorify its utmost powers at last, in a new world, with new bodies, new skies, new landscapes, new knowledge, new joys, and almost a new God! Yes, almost a new God! Hallelujah!—almost a new God! For, surely it must grieve God that our sins have constrained him, for our own sake, to so great an extent, to conceal his goodness, to frown, when he would have smiled; to chide, when he would have cheered; and to chasten, when he would have comforted! And

surely it would gladden his inmost heart, to find all occasion for such displeasure eternally removed; to have the long-wished for opportunity, at last—if I may thus speak after the manner of men—of showing himself, to his children and heirs, in his true character, in all the grace, and all the glory, and all the ecstasy of universal and everlasting love—of essential, unchangeable, and infinite love—in a word, of showing himself, as far as our apprehensions are concerned, almost a new God! O surely, “in that day,” the angel of humanity, no longer repelled, would rush to the throne, and exclaim: “O Lord, I will *praise* thee! Though thou *wast* angry with me, thine anger is *turned away*, and thou *comfortest* me!” And then, rising from his feet, and looking all over heaven, and appealing even to the star-crowned sentinels, in the remotest immensity, the angel would continue: “Behold! God is my salvation! I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song: He, also, is become my salvation!”

But, if this could not be so: if human character could not be redeemed; if the will of man could not be reconciled to the will of God; if no PERSUASIVE INFLUENCE, adequate to the accomplishment of this object, could be found, either in nature or in God; then sin would challenge its decreed result, and man, alike abandoned of his Maker in character, condition, and constitution, must inevitably perish.

What then? We return to the question: Could the need be supplied? POWER could not supply it: that is plain. There stood Omnipotence, with all the resources of creation and providence at command, infinitely hopeless! Was there any other agency that could be employed? There was *one*—ONLY ONE—but that—God be praised! CHRIST be praised! God IN Christ, be eternally praised!

—*that* one, that ONLY one, was ALL-SUFFICIENT! What was it? SUFFERING!—the agency of suffering.

Power is great; but suffering is greater. Omnipotence is very great; but suffering is greater than Omnipotence. Yet, let me qualify these statements. It is in this immediate connection, that I mean suffering is greater. In its own sphere, power is greater than suffering: but, in *this* sphere, suffering is greater than power. Power creates: suffering cannot create. Power provides: suffering cannot provide. But can power redeem? Oh no!—it is suffering, and suffering only, that redeems! Power can illuminate the obscure constitution: suffering cannot do that. Power can enrich the impoverished condition: suffering cannot do that. But can power correct the perverted character? Oh no! Suffering, and suffering only, can do that! Power can torture the body, derange the mind, and wound and crush the heart: while suffering shrinks from the thought of such acts as these. But can power subdue the will? Oh no! Suffering, and suffering only, can do that! Power commands: suffering entreats. Power compels: suffering persuades. Power hardens: suffering melts. Power shuts: suffering opens. Power isolates: suffering blends. Power appeals to interest: suffering, to conscience. Power appeals to fear: suffering, to love. Power concentrates itself in wrath: suffering diffuses itself in mercy. Power, like the lightning, strikes a single object: suffering, like the cloud, baptizes the world with its tears, and bends the rainbow of peace over mountains all rustling with thanksgiving, and valleys of silent beauty, all sparkling with praise.

Little things illustrate great principles. See that young mother. Her darling daughter—only three years old—stands before her, in opposition of will, unyielding as a rock. All the authority, and appliances of superior power

—except the rod—have been tried in vain. And must the rod be used? A young mother, all tenderness and love herself, inflict a pain on such a small, soft, warm embodiment of beauty as that—the sweet nestling of her bosom! How *can* she do it? And yet, the child will be ruined, if not corrected. She looks on the little trespasser; until, suddenly, the child springs to her side, flings her arms around her neck, and lisps her earnest promises of instant amendment. What wrought this sudden change? The mother was a sufferer: and the daughter, lifting at first a careless glance at her countenance, saw the tears in her eyes, and could resist no more.

See that middle-aged woman. She is the mother of many children. Some of them, have nearly grown to man's estate. All of them, sons and daughters, are kind and respectful in their deportment towards her. She has good reason to hope they will be happy and useful in the world. She is a Christian; has given her children a Christian training; and has been rewarded by seeing some of them cherishing her spirit and imitating her example. But her husband—he is not what the world *calls* a wicked man: and yet—he *is* a wicked man. He is not dishonest: or, if he be dishonest, the world does not know it. He has not been unfaithful to his marital vows: or, if he have, the world does not know it. He has not been inattentive to the physical wants of his family: or, if he have, the world does not know it. He is not an ignorant man—though he prides himself too much on his intelligence. He is not an uncourteous man—though his courtesy sometimes has an air of insincerity. He is not cross, to his household: nor cruel, according to the common estimate, to his wife. But the essential principle of all wickedness has the complete control of him. He is *selfish*. In all his thoughts, in all his feelings, in all his words, in

all his actions, and in all the circles in which he moves, he lives only as a *selfish* man. I do not mean, penurious: he might give away the last cent he has in the world, and remain as selfish as ever. I do not mean heedless of the rights of others: he might discharge the last obligation of social justice, and remain as selfish as ever. I mean, that, let him do what he will, he does it from a selfish motive. I mean, that he is not like his wife. I mean, that he is not a Christian. I mean, that he is not converted. I mean, that he has been born but once. I mean, that he is merely a natural man. I mean, that he is destitute of spiritual life. I mean, that he is "dead in trespasses and sins." I mean, that there is no love of God in him. I mean, that instead of listening to God, when he said, "My son! give me thy *heart*!" he has listened rather to the Devil, when *he* said, "My son! give *me* thy heart!" and has given it to him. I mean, therefore, that instead of God dwelling within him, the Devil dwells within him: that, instead of being a child of God, he is a child of the Devil: and that, instead of being an heir of God, he is an heir of the Devil; and that, instead of having a good hope of heaven, he has a sad fear of hell. I mean, that if the partner of his bosom, whom he found bowed in her father's house, at the family altar; whom he promised, in the presence of God, in distinct response to the minister of God, to "love, comfort, honor, and keep—in sickness, and in health; and, forsaking all others, keep himself only unto her, so long as they both should live"—shall at last get to heaven, it will not be because of any help that he has ever rendered her, even by reading a chapter of the Bible, or offering a single prayer in her hearing: ay, not even when she lay in her paleness and weakness, with a new-born babe—his own image—touching with its tender lips, and sweetening with its fragrant breath, her fountains

of life. I mean, that if his sons and daughters, after leading lives of piety and benevolence; and leaving others like them, to pursue the same course; and so to transmit the holy influence from generation to generation, to the end of time, and the harvest of the world—shall reach the same heaven: it will not be because of any advantage derived from his principles or conduct; or with any grateful recollections of a religious interest, on his part, in their behalf. I mean, that if his wife and children, without the exception of one, shall be re-united in a better home, in that better sphere,—it is likely to be, with a sense of *his* absence, after all—the absence of the husband and father whom they love so much, notwithstanding his great defect; and for whom they will continue to address their prayers to the Highest, as long as they shall have breath, or thought, to pray. See, now, that exemplary matron, that loving wife, that affectionate and faithful mother: alas! the burden that has oppressed her so long, is growing too heavy to be borne much longer. I had almost said—that her husband has no soul: for how *can* a man have a soul, and yet thus spend his whole life in selfish negligence of his obligations to God, and of the highest interests of his wife and children, and of his own salvation? But still, he *has* some soul. He sees his wife sinking in heart, and hope, if not in life. He sees the effect of the slow but deep impression, which all her smiles—poor woman!—her *faint* smiles, cannot hide. He sees that her form has wasted, and that her cheeks have become pale: more so, it seems to him, than the mere lapse of years may account for. And then her countenance: how subdued it is! retaining a sort of spiritual light, indeed; but, with its natural glistening all gone! He begins to wake up to the *awful* truth, that his wife has spent her whole wedded life, chained fast, like a Roman convict, to a *body of death*!—

that, wherever she has moved, among her children, among her friends, in all her social range, she has carried about with her "*the body of this death!*"—ever inquiring, like the Apostle, "*Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*"—never, indeed, desiring to be *separated* from it; rather clinging to it, as something which, notwithstanding its deadly influences, companionship has rendered dear: but still praying, day and night, year after year; and calling upon her children to assist her prayers—still praying, with all *long-suffering* and *tears*, not that God would *remove* the body, but—that He would *make it alive!* Poor man! he begins to see this! Poor man! he begins to *feel* this! He wonders no more, that she has failed so much. He only wonders that she could bear it all, so meekly and so kindly. "Alas!" he exclaims, "what a *sufferer* she has been!" But more than this is necessary, in such a case. He has another **SUFFERER** to think of, before his hard heart will freely flow. For the first time in his life, he enters his closet for prayer. He lingers long with God alone. He comes forth a *living man!* He calls his family together. He reads the Bible. They all kneel in worship. They rise again: fall on each other's necks: weep: lift up their voices: bless God: and triumph in His salvation. The children were never so happy before: and as for their mother—Oh! who can tell her transport, as she stands there—with the load of her life all gone; the chains, under her feet; and the body of death, transformed into a man of God, the bridegroom of her soul, and the high priest at the mercy seat of the Temple of Home.

Pardon me, my friends! I did not design these details, when I turned to this illustration. I intended a brief succession of exemplifications of the principles. But God may have some purpose, to be answered by this. Others are omitted.

Let us now return to the main inquiry. Granting the influence of suffering on domestic sympathies: granting its influence even in wider circles: how could it be made efficient in so vast an enterprise as that of redeeming human character in whole?—of redeeming the will of all mankind to the will of God? O mighty question! O question, that the world should ask, with breathless anxiety! O question, that time, all tremulous with interest, might fold his wings, and lean on his scythe-staff, and beg of God to have answered! O question, for the privilege of answering which an archangel might barter his crown; with a thrill of transcendent bliss, and a shout of transcendent thanksgiving! But, let the world remain careless, if it will. Let time spread his pinions, and pursue his flight. And let the archangel be still—and humbly wear his crown.

The question, however, must be answered. What then? Could the great need be supplied? Could human character be redeemed? Was it possible that an **EXAMPLE OF SUFFERING** could be exhibited, and properly exhibited, *so great* as to succeed, where all the resources of creation and providence were of no avail? where Omnipotence itself had no hope? And so, was it possible for God, in assurance of the sufficiency of such a remedy, to justify his wisdom in the sufferance of sin?

Let us come to the Bible. Let us come to it, remembering that it is the book of beginnings. We have cited, "The beginning of the Gospel." We have contemplated the beginning of providence, and the beginning of creation. Adoringly, we have even contemplated God—as He was, eternally before creation. Let us now repair to a point, not eternally before, but, just preceding creation.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.”

How was that? God forbid that I should pretend to know *how* it was! I only know that it is written—*it was so*. What then? Could this Word of God do, what God himself could not do? Whether He could do what God could *not* do, may be considered, after a little: but here it may be remarked, that it is plain He could do what it is generally supposed God alone *can* do—for thus the Bible proceeds:

“All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.”

How was *that*?—it is again inquired. We have always thought that God made all things; that in Him alone was life; and that He breathed into man’s nostrils the breath of life. That is true: but this, also, is true. The former is written, and the latter is written: and they are both correct. God forbid that we should deny either!

I stand, in the temple of the Bible, in the place of the oracle; or, if I may so express it, with all the reverence I feel, in the grand whispering gallery of divine revelation. It is exceedingly solemn—shadowy, silent, and solemn—with a sense of God—Oh, how solemn! Methinks I hear the communings of God and the Word—after the *sin of man*. And thus the Word addresses God: thou art love, and whatever love can do, for the redemption of human character, thou desirest to have done. But *power*, the ordinary instrument of love, is powerless in this connection. All its resources are employed in vain. The *will* was not made to be *forced*. If it could be forced, the forcing of it would only prove its degeneracy. In its true dignity, it is too noble to submit to violence. But love

has one more instrument—an instrument never employed hitherto, but whose efficiency cannot be doubted. Love may *suffer*; as well as work. Am I not thy Son? So man is thy son. Am I not thine Image? So man is our image. Was it not *by me*, that *thou* didst create all things? Was it not *by me*, that *thou* didst make man? Is not *my interest* in him, therefore, like *thine own*? Now, then, as love has exerted its *power* by me, let love resort to *suffering* by me. Let man *live*—let the race multiply—let *sin* be *endured*, a while, in hope of the holy issue—this will be *wise*. In due time, *I* will be MADE FLESH, and dwell among them, full of grace and truth, as thine only-begotten Son, released from thy bosom to declare thee unto them, not as an enemy, against whose will they should set their own, but, as their FATHER, infinite in love toward them. True: when I enter the world, though I made it, it will not know me: though I appeal to my own, they will not receive me. But, Father! Thou lovest them, and I love them: and I am willing, and shall even be happy, to SUFFER, both *by* them and *for* them.

And thus God replies to the WORD:—thou art my Son: my beloved Son: even more beloved than they all. Instead of sparing thee—shall I deliver thee up for them? I see the need, the great need: but how shall I supply it thus? If Power could supply it—if such efforts of Omnipotence as have never yet been made, could meet the want, my love would delight to make them. But how can I consent that *thou* shouldst *suffer*? Is it not better that *they* should *perish*? Now, thou enjoyest the love wherewith I loved thee, before the foundation of the world. Now, thou art glorified with the glory which thou hadst with me, before the world was. Now, thou art in the form of God, and thinkest it not robbery to be equal with God. Now, thou art acknowledged, by me and by the

universe, to be the very brightness of my glory and the express image of my person. How, then, canst thou bear, even though only in appearance, to lose my love? How canst thou bear to obscure thy glory, and make thyself of no reputation? How canst thou bear to take upon thee, the form of a servant? Nay, far worse than this: how canst thou bear to exchange my image for the fashion of man?—of sinful man? debased to the likeness of the devil? Nay, more: how canst thou bear to become obedient unto death? How canst thou bear even to die on the cross? Yet, if thou sufferest at all: *thus* must thou suffer. Thou shalt grow up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground. Thou shalt have no form nor comeliness. When men see thee, there shall be no beauty, that they should desire thee. Thou shalt be despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Even in thy mortal agony, they will esteem thee stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. And I must *seem* to take part with them. I must lay upon thee, the iniquity of them all. I must appear to take pleasure in bruising thee, and putting thee to grief. And, after they shall have hidden their faces from thee, I must hide my face from thee: and thou must die alone. Even though thou shalt cry from the cross, through the thick darkness,—My God! my God! *why* hast *thou* forsaken me?—I must turn a deaf ear toward thee, and answer not a word! O my Son! my dearly beloved Son! how canst *thou* bear this: and how can *I* bear it?

And thus the WORD replies to God:—Father! if *thou* canst bear it, I am willing to bear it. The *need* is *great*: and it cannot otherwise be *supplied*. In this way it may be supplied. In this way, man's character may be, redeemed. In this way, and in this way alone, *his* will may be *reconciled* to thine! Love, leaning on the arm

of Omnipotence, shall smile through her tears, as she sees that suffering can subdue, where force is vain!

And thus, once more, God answers the Word:—It *shall* be so, my Son! All power in heaven and earth shall be given unto thee, to sustain thee in thy glorious mediation. All things that I have are thine. As I have life in myself, so have I given unto thee to have life in thyself. When thou art brought into the world, as my first-begotten, I will command all the angels of God to worship thee. When thou walkest among men, I will command all men to honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. At the sound of thy voice, the dead shall start into natural life: and, at the breathing of thy spirit, the living shall thrill with eternal life. Die, indeed, thou must: but thy death shall be the death of sin, the death of death, and the death of hell. In the midst of an apparent triumph of thy *power*—when standing in the midst of acclaiming hosts in the city of my choice—thou shalt turn from the throne with the divinest scorn, and welcome the cross, with the shout—“AND I, IF I BE LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH, WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME!” Fear not! my Son! the need *shall* be supplied! “Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession!” And when thou returnest to my bosom, I will give thee “a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father!” Thy tears shall be followed by the weeping of the world: thy groans shall awaken the lamentations of the world: thy prayers shall excite the supplications of the world: thy obedience shall subdue the waywardness of the world: and thy sufferings shall

reconcile the will of the world to the will of God—conform the character of the world to the character of God—and so, finally restore the condition and constitution of the world to their first perfection in the beauty, and glory, and bliss, and blessing of God.

SERMON XIX.

VISION OF THE BLACK HORSE.

BY REV. JOHN W. HANNER, A.M.,

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"And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo! a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine."—Revelation vi. 5, 6.

THE world is in agitation. The repose of ages, in which thrones and altars were held sacred, is broken. Ancient monarchies, which long defied dissolution, and for centuries mocked the wasting power of time, have passed away like a dream. In the old world, from the Don to the Tagus; from the shores of the Bosphorus to Lapland, throughout wide Europe; and from the new States of South America to ancient China, skirting Africa, traversing Asia, to the extremity of the globe on the frozen North, the spirit of change seems to be coming over the face of things. In our own country, from Oregon to the Floridas, from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific wave, the spirit of religious change, of all others the most tremendous and permanent in its results, simultaneously ranges. Its signs are in every land under heaven. The face of the sky

indicates a coming tempest; "the signs of the times" betoken approaching convulsions. It is not a single cloud, in which sleep the bolts that shall shiver an oak here and there, and scathe a few lowly shrubs, that now rises to view; but the storm seems to be gathering in every region, the lightning gleams in its passage from one cloud to another, as if every tree in the forest would be enkindled; as though the tempest, before purifying the atmosphere, must spread ruin on every side.

The whole fabric of human government seems insecure, and the entire frame-work of human society appears to tremble. All history presents no scale of reckoning for times like these. There is a war of opinions throughout the world; such opinions as have never before been chronicled. None can tell, but of any department of human government, civil or ecclesiastical, it may be told in the news of to-morrow, that a revolution has begun. Unparalleled events are crowded together, and seem but the incidents of a week.

No light issuing from the earth, no meteor-gleam of high imaginings, will enable us to read a single page of future history. But there is *one* book that contains the history of our world, from the beginning to the end; and this book is full of unerring prophecy. It unfolds the workings of "the mystery of iniquity;" opens the dark recesses of the future, and announces the final and eternal establishment of the kingdom of God. The earth is the Lord's, and his word vindicates its subjection to his dominion. The Bible is the history of God, the record of his doings among the beings of our race; and reading it we learn, that although the reign of sin is suffered for a season, yet its progress is marked, its power limited, and its overthrow decreed.

The restless sea is a faithful emblem of this changeful world; and as God stays its proud waves by fixed limits,

so he has set his word as the bound of all the tossing commotions of earthly powers, as a perpetual decree that they cannot pass. But until the predicted event realize its truth in fact, it cannot be traced and defined so well as in the past fulfilment of prophecies, which show the termination of many political and religious convulsions, as clearly as the line which the retiring wave leaves on the beach, marks the ebbing of the tide ; yet, if we know the point of prophetic history on which we stand, the word of God may enable us to look beyond the present appearance of things, and see, as by a light from heaven, their ultimate issue ; even as one who stands upon the sea-shore, however the waves roar and toss themselves, may fix the utmost limits of the highest billow, and show the point which it cannot pass, where its power shall be broken on the sand.

Futurity is impenetrable by human wisdom ; and the purposes of Jehovah are not to be fully scanned by finite minds. The fate of kingdoms is a sealed book, which no uninspired mortal can open. It was, however, partly unfolded to the prophets who testified of Jesus ; and we may now take the record and read the history of many a nation, as from the beginning it was written in the Book of the Lord.

The gift of prophecy, at the close of the Apostolic age, was consummated by a more glorious vision than was ever witnessed by any prophet of Israel ; the fate of the Church and world, to the final consummation of all things, was disclosed to the last living Apostle of Jesus Christ, by immediate revelation from heaven, in a manner which beggars the imagination of Homer, and shows that the fabled transactions of heathen deities were but the mimicry of things Divine. The incantations of Pagan Orgies veiled in the gloom of dark temples, the ambiguous

responses of Delphic and Pythian Oracles, from the rock and tripod, originated in the phrenzy of a troubled brain, or were the fraudulent inventions of a deceitful heart to make gain of the folly of mankind. Nor can credulity itself, whether rational or wild, trace them to a higher source than the agency of demon gods. But they are no more to be compared with the Oracles of the Living God than is Olympus with the throne of the Eternal One. The prophets of Israel spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and subsequent events have proved that they uttered the truth of God. Yet, high as their office was, beyond any that had been previously delegated to mortals, it was only to bear testimony to Jesus and prepare the way of his gospel. To the son of Zebedee, an exile in Patmos, was committed the more glorious office of showing forth the final triumphs of the Cross; and of imparting to man the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

In the vision unrolled to his view, he saw a throne, and in the right hand of him who sat upon it, "a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals." No *man* was found in heaven, in earth, or under the earth, that could open the book or look thereon. Even six-winged angels, swift to do the will of God, full of eyes, gifted with bright visions of his works, could not break the seals nor read the book. While the beloved Apostle wept over the want of *creature* ability for this work, his attention was directed to the Lion of Juda's tribe, the Lamb of God, as *One*, not a *man*, not a creature, who had prevailed to loose the seals and open the book.

Some, called interpreters, have made this book, with its seals, the play thing of their fancy; others, called Christians, have profaned it into a license for jesting; while sceptics have held it as the object of their ridicule

and scorn. Nevertheless, the word of God standeth sure, like the sun in the heavens, untouched by the clouds that float in our atmosphere, untainted by the putrescent exhalations that rise from the earth; and it will stand, when heaven and earth have fled away, and its glorious truths shall shine on as lights that brightly burn in the bosom of God, when stars and suns shall shine no more.

Past history lays before us a long series of events since the time of this vision. Many of the things that were to be, have already been; many more shall be hereafter. The sun is not extinct, though the clouds hide him from our view. The book is true, though the veil and cloud on the heart keep us from comprehending its meaning. If ever genuine humility be a virtue, or proud arrogance a crime, it is so when we undertake the task of interpreting any portion of that mystic book which is the theme of angelic praise. Having examined this subject in all the lights that I could bring to bear upon it, and, after due meditation, availing myself of every help to which I have had access, the most that I can do, is, to repeat what the Lord hath spoken, and then point to the things that have been done upon the earth.

In order to understand the symbols of the text, and ascertain what they represent, it is necessary that we have a definite idea of the scene and circumstances of the vision, and refer to the opening of the first and second seal of the book which the Lamb took from the right hand of Him seated on the throne.

The scene is laid in heaven, and the things which John beheld in the vision, were to be done on earth. He was in a lonely sea-girt island, with his face turned toward heaven, looking upon a throne there. He saw, seated round it, four and twenty elders, clothed in white raiment,

with crowns of gold upon their heads; seven burning lamps, representing the seven spirits of God; he heard thunderings and voices proceeding from the throne; he saw a sea of glass, like chrystal, spread out before it, blazing with awful effulgence; he saw four beasts full of eyes, in every part eyes, and full of energy; he beheld one seated on the throne more brilliant in appearance than jasper and sardine gems, encircled with a rainbow that glowed with emerald beauty, having in his hand a parchment written on one side and sealed on the other, as it had been rolled together, with seven seals. He heard the loud proclamation of a strong angel as he cried, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" and no creature competent to the task being found, the Lamb, which he beheld standing, "as it had been slain," in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts and elders, advanced and took the book. Having been worshipped and praised with harps and odours from golden vials, with a new song and prostrate adoration by ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels, together with the elders and living creatures, he proceeded to loose the seals and open the book. As the seals are broken, one after another, and the parchment is drawn out, visions are successively unrolled to John.

The Lamb breaks the first seal, and the object immediately in view is "a *white* horse." Whatever this symbol might represent, its appropriate and distinguishing mark is *whiteness*. The term *white*, I believe, occurs seventeen times in other places of the Revelation. Twice it is descriptive of angelic purity, and in the other fifteen instances it can only be applied to Christ or his Church.

When Jesus himself was seen in vision by John, "his head and his hairs were *white*." It is a *white* cloud in which he comes; a *white* throne is his. His people are

called to be like him, to wash their robes and make them *white*. To those that overcome he will give a *white* stone; for such are worthy to walk with him in *white*. To the Bride, (the Church,) was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and *white*. This is a fitting emblem of Christ and his Church,—a conqueror, with bow and crown going forth on a white horse.

Toward the close of the Revelation this same figure, under the same designation, is introduced in a manner which clearly shows that it can be descriptive of Christ and his Church only. It puts an end to all doubt as to the signification of *this* symbol. The same personage, under the *same symbol*, one sitting on a white horse, who was at first seen going forth to conquer, is seen, after the warfare is accomplished, triumphant over all that opposed him; and he who at first had a bow and a crown given him, is seen, at last, with many added diadems and coronets, having on his vesture a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, still united with his people, whom he does not desert in his triumph after having gained the victory; for "his armies are seen following him upon white horses clothed in fine linen, white and clean."

When the second seal was opened, "there went out another horse that was red." If one horse represent the Christian religion, *another* horse must represent *another* religion. And as each horse has its rider, so each religion must have its founder, head, or apostle. A perfect similarity in all these respects is required, when the symbol is denominated *another*. The rider on the red horse, had "power *given to him* to take peace from the earth," and also "a great sword."

When Daniel, upon the banks of the Ulai, was made to understand the symbols of his prophetic vision, the mysterious being who explained them, said: "When the

transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully; and shall prosper and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand." With the question of a new or *another* religion before us, in comparing Daniel's vision with John's, we find that the identity of the "king of fierce countenance," and the rider on the red horse, the author of another religion than the Christian, is the close accordance expressed. Of his "fierce countenance and of his destroying wonderfully," the color of blood is the badge. His "mighty power" is betokened by the "great sword;" and as it was not by "his own power" that he became mighty, so here it is said the "sword was given to him." As he "understood dark sentences," and magnified himself against the Prince of the host, his was another religion beside that of the Messiah. The description in either case is almost literal; and the symbol is the most expressive language. Another religion of a different and opposite nature from Christianity was to arise; the founder of another faith was to appear, who, instead of proclaiming peace from heaven, would take it from the earth; whose religion would be propagated by crafty policy and slaughter; and who would wield a great sword. Could Mohammed and his religion be more strikingly portrayed? And may not the false prophet of Mecca be detected in the rider on the red horse, without the aid of a prophet of Israel? Power and a great sword were given to him; he took peace from the earth; he was a king of fierce countenance, a wonderful destroyer of the holy people, and understood *dark sentences*. His pretended revelations consisted of mystic

unmeaning ribaldry, understood only by the wily impostor; each successive one suited to his policy or passion, written in scraps and broken fragments on palm leaves and the shoulder-blades of mutton—cast into a chest in the custody of one of his wives, where they remained until two years after his death; and then these dark sentences were collected and published in the Koran by his friend and successor.

Mohammedanism is *another* religion, entirely dissimilar from the Christian. Not *pure*, but bloody; not white, but *red*. Its founder was not a deliverer, but a *destroyer*. He was not a *Saviour*, but a *warrior*; not a warrior against sin, but against men. He fought not with spiritual weapons, but with a carnal metallic sword; and by the sword his religion prospered. The proof of his mission was the multitude of the slain. The miracles of *his mercy* were gory fields dyed with human blood. The test, the characteristic of his faith, the charm of his power, the secret of his success, was “a great sword.”

We need only appeal to Gibbon, and the Koran, to find a perfect illustration of this figurative description of another religion, which succeeded Christianity in its origin, and which has maintained so prominent a part in the “things that were to be” after this vision.

The infidel historian says:—“The prophet of Medina assumed, in his new revelations, a *fiercer* and *more sanguinary* tone; the means of persuasion had been tried; the season of forbearance had elapsed, and he was now commanded to propagate his religion by the sword, to destroy the monuments of idolatry, and without regarding the sanctity of days or months, to pursue the unbelieving nations of the earth. The fair option of friendship, submission, or battle, was proposed to the enemies of Mohammed. If they professed the creed of Islam, they

were admitted to all the temporal and spiritual benefits of his primitive disciples, and marched under the same banner to extend the religion they had embraced. In the first month of his reign he practised the lessons of the holy warfare. The *martial apostle fought in person* in nine battles or sieges; and fifty enterprises of war were achieved in ten years by himself and lieutenants. From all sides the roving Arabs were allured to the standard of religion and plunder; the enjoyment of wealth and beauty was a feeble type of the joys of paradise, prepared for the valiant martyrs of the faith."

Mohammed himself says:—"The sword is the key of heaven and hell. A drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting and prayer; whosoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven; at the day of judgment his wounds shall be resplendent as vermillion, and odoriferous as musk; and the loss of his limbs shall be supplied with the wings of angels and cherubims."

Before he claimed Divine right to use the sword, he fled from Mecca, a helpless fugitive, and hid himself in a cave; but after this flight, the date of his religion, his weapon of war was the sword, and peace was taken from the earth.

But the evil propensity in man, who takes pleasure in unrighteousness, was yet to be manifested in another form. And it is an obvious fact, that the world has scarcely suffered more from the vain belief of a lie, than from a wicked perversion of the truth,—even perverted till its very nature has been transformed from *white* into *black*.

We are now prepared for the symbols in our text; a black horse, his rider—a yoke—and a guardian angel, the "third beast," who cried, "Come and see."

On the opening of the third seal, there is a repetition of the same symbol that appeared in the visions at the opening of the first and second seal, *a horse*; and there must be a similarity in the nature of the object represented. Any interpretation incongruous, or discordant in this respect, makes a conviction of its truth unreasonable. If the white horse denotes the Christian religion, one system of faith; and if the red horse denotes another religion, the Mohammedan, it follows, that the black horse must also denote some form of religion, or represent the prevalence of some faith or system of religious opinions. With this indisputable similarity of symbol and object represented, you will observe that there is a marked difference besides color, between the second and third symbolic representations. The former is said to be "*another horse*," the latter is *not* said to be another. The "*red horse*" appears in the field of view as arising without any antecedent existence; "*and there went out another horse that was red.*" In manifest variance from this, of the third horse the text states, in the same words as of the first, "*and I beheld, and lo! a black horse.*" It is not said to be another, and it appeared immediately on the scene, without the marked sequence which distinguishes the succession of the red horse to the white one. These peculiarities exhibit a manifest contradistinction in the manner of introducing the symbols of the second and third seals, as seen and described in the prophecy.

"A black horse, and he that sat on him had a pair of balances [*a yoke*] in his hand." It is not from the mere want of an apposite illustration that I prefer the word *yoke* to the phrase *a pair of balances*; but because it better expresses the meaning of the original word in the text. I believe the term, "*a pair of balances*," does

not elsewhere occur in the New Testament; but the original word, here rendered "a pair of balances," occurs repeatedly, and is uniformly translated *yoke*. "Take my *yoke* upon you," said Jesus, speaking of his religion and the duties it imposes, "for my *yoke* is easy." Peter, sharply rebuking the converted Jews for wishing to impose upon the Gentiles the burdensome rites and ceremonies of Judaism, said: "Why tempt ye God, to put a *yoke* on the neck of the disciples?" Paul, on the same subject, says to the Galatians:—"Be not entangled again with the *yoke* of bondage." Writing to Timothy, in reference to temporal or civil bondage, he says: "Let as many servants [slaves] as are under the *yoke*, count their own masters worthy of all honor." In all these instances, the Greek word is the same; and, except in one case, it is accusative singular, as in the text: the very same word in declension, number, and case, here translated by "a pair of balances." Why our translators should render the accusative singular of ζυγος, "a pair of balances," I cannot even conjecture. That it does mean *a balance*, is admitted; but never, I should think, a *pair* of balances, any more than a yoke can mean a *pair* of yokes.

"A BLACK HORSE." The want of light is darkness; the reverse of white is black. The Word of God giveth light; where it shines all is pure and white. In striking contrast with the light of God's Word, the purity of the Gospel and the consequent *whiteness* characteristic of the followers of Jesus, where, in the records of the past, what, occupying a place of equal importance in the history of delusion with Mohammedanism, giving character to an era and the name of *dark* to ages, is that form of religion to be found which appeared on earth in its appropriate and prophetic designation, **BLACK**; and which

has also been characterized by the *yoke* which it has imposed upon the world? Where?—what? Every one but those imbued with its own *sable hue*, and fettered by its yoke, must answer, ROMAN CATHOLICISM. Here, then, papacy has its first place in the book of the Revelation of the things that were to be, subsequent to this vision of St. John. And it is marked and defined as a system of religious *blackness* and *bondage*.

It is true “the mystery of iniquity” *began* to work even in the days of the Apostles. It was not, however, until *after* the rise of Mohammedanism, by the corruption of Christian doctrines, the exclusion of the Scriptures from the people, systematic image worship, the introduction of other mediations than the true and only one, and the exaltation of the papacy to rule over the abject mind till the little light that was in it became darkness, that the Roman Catholic religion put on its gross darkness and appeared as only *black*. Neither is it, like Mohammedanism, professedly another religion, nor did it go forth for the first time after the prevalence of Mohammed’s imposture; but the black horse, like the white one, in the days of the Apostles, was seen immediately on the field of view when Mohammedanism had just been described.

The “ten kingdoms” may have been previously given into the hands of the Pope; but the doctrine of the Church was not so corrupted then, nor was that heavy yoke to be seen which it afterwards imposed. As a form of faith, it became darker and darker throughout the long night of the *dark* ages, while it reigned triumphant, till the tenth century, which Roman Catholics themselves term “the age of darkness and ignorance.” Blackness is its befitting symbol, and marks its character as a religion. The Bible was long unknown among them in the common tongue, and it was to be believed in only as interpreted by a

succession of priests, whose changeable decisions were marked with all the weakness and blindness of erring mortals. The light of the Gospel was hid, and dark superstition took its place. The public mind, like the face of a nun, was muffled in black. The commandments of men, the decretals of the Church, were held in as high authority as the word of God. Its brightness was obscured, its whiteness tarnished; the word that could have enlightened men and made them clean, was kept from them; and when it was hid by human artifice, and the exercise of private judgment was taken away, the mind was necessarily turned into blackness; so that where popery reigned, ignorance of the first principles of natural religion came over the minds of men, such as paganism itself could not have deepened. How, in this respect, do the writings of heathens put to shame many popish legends! For instance: St. Patrick, who it is believed, *was not* a papist, sailing over to Ireland on a *mill-stone*! St. Dennis, they tell us, carried his own head under his arm two miles after it was cut off. Caradoc, a young prince, is enamored of Miss Winefride of Wales. In Romish legends, she being a nun, could not yield to his suit. This enrages the prince, and, with a cruel blow, he cuts off her head. St. Beuno interferes, settles the career of the young lover, Korah like, by making the earth open and swallow him up. On the spot where the dead nun's head fell, a "holy well" opens, which works miracles of healing to this day! St. Beuno takes up the nun's head, *kisses* it, places it on the bleeding stump of the neck; covers it with his mantle, says mass, prays to the virgin Mary, and, behold! *saintess* Winefride jumps up perfectly well! The evidence of this was perpetuated by the appearance of a fine circle, like a thread, where the neck and head were nicely cemented together! She is added

to the family group of papal goddesses as duly canonized. Paganism might safely be challenged to produce a legend that would not blush in the presence of this ; and it may be doubted whether a match for it can be found in *all* the annals of superstition, aside from those of the Church of Rome.

What one word but *black* could denote *the Church*, when official documents were attested by a mark, because my lord, the archbishop, could not write his own name ; and when a bishop, reading the Bible, could say, he knew nothing of the book but that it was written against them ? Or, to adopt a more general illustration, when saints were invoked as intercessors ; when penances were done for crimes ; indulgences granted for money, and sold at public auction ; and when, as the cause of all, the Bible was a sealed book ?

If Mohammedanism took peace from the earth, popery, for a long period, extinguished the light of the Gospel and imposed a yoke on the world. It wrested from the laity all right of appeal to Scripture, and made the Bible the least part of clerical study. The opinion of the Church became the rule of faith. The Pope claimed infallibility as his own. Every opinion was judged, every doctrine weighed in "the nice balance of the Vatican," as Gibbon calls it. In one scale lay the opinion of *the Church*, the canons and decisions of councils ; in the other, all right to think, all private sentiments were laid ; if the latter either fell short, or preponderated a single scruple ; if the balance swayed a hair's breadth, the doctrine was branded as heretical. In other words, if men did not believe as the Pope and Priests believed, they were denounced as guilty of error ; and neither the dictates of conscience, nor the authority of Scripture, was any more regarded than the small dust of the balance.

The heroes of the Reformation, in the tracts which they published for its furtherance in France during the sixteenth century, which greatly assisted the sister of Francis I. the gentle and condescending Margaret, in her search after truth, speak of the "primitive Church—pure word of God—a spiritual worship, and a Christian liberty that rejected the *yoke of human traditions* and superstitions." A yoke is the symbol which the chronicler adopts in describing the bondage of human tradition and of popery; and by what other symbol could it be so fully represented?

The papal Church gives no such illustrations of freedom, purity, and faith, as the Apostles of Jesus Christ practised and enjoined. The pretended successor of Peter imposed upon all a heavier yoke than that which Peter himself would not suffer to be placed on the neck of any disciple. Unlike the Mohammedan religion, which owed its origin to its founder, and was speedily completed by each successive chapter of the Koran, the papal faith grew by slow degrees, and did not attain to all its blackness, nor impose its yoke in all its galling heaviness, till after the lapse of ages. As the darkness increased, the yoke gradually became heavier up to the seventh century. Then, Moshiem says, "Every Roman Pontiff (true to his character) added something new to the ancient rites and institutions. These superstitious inventions were, in the time of Charlemagne, propagated from Rome among all the other Latin Churches, whose subjection to the Roman ritual was necessary to satisfy the ambitious designs of the lordly Pontiff." The rites and ceremonies introduced in the ninth century were endless. In the tenth, the superstitious age, a load of ceremonies was brought in from various councils assembled in England, Germany, France, and Italy; and their number continued

to increase in proportion to that of saints, which multiplied from day to day ; for every new saint had a new festival, a new form of worship, and a new round of religious rites.

The union of darkness and the yoke, which has always distinguished popery, was natural enough. The yoke followed the darkness, and the darkness followed the whole papal system, as naturally as effects follow their causes.

But the fact that the Pope, as head and manager, ruling over the dark and apostate Church of Rome, held a yoke in his hand, is so notorious, that the historian incidentally adopts the language of this prophecy, when he describes the Protestants as having withdrawn "their necks from the *papal yoke*." And this term is of frequent occurrence in modern Church history. When Francis I. humbled the ecclesiastical power of Rome, by releasing Berquin from prison, the historian says: "Under his reign it was fondly hoped that France might free herself from the *papal yoke*." Even the fanatic Munzer said, "Luther has liberated men's consciences from the *papal yoke*, but has left them in a carnal liberty." It is proper to note, that this yoke was not fully imposed till after the rise of Mohammed's imposture. It was not until the Mass, that grand arcanum of popish craft; Auricular Confession, that secret source of Papal power, wealth, and wickedness; and the Inquisition, that slaughter-house of infernal cruelty, were established, that this yoke was *fully* fixed upon the Church of Rome. And these were brutalizing inventions of the thirteenth century.

The slavish subjection of the mind to superstitious fears was the power which the Pope, in his ride on the black horse, exercised in exalting himself and supporting *his* Church by a multiplicity of ceremonies and observances,

such as no other form of faith ever imposed upon the world. "Doing according to his own will;" promoting image worship; creating saints to be honored; enriching their altars; "dividing the land for gain;" assuming, by virtue of pretended divine right, temporal power; "forbidding to marry; commanding to abstain from meats;" enjoining penances without number; exercising inquisitorial authority over the judgment and consciences of men; and, "by all deceivableness of unrighteousness, magnifying himself above all," the Pope laid his yoke upon clergy and laity, kings and kingdoms; light was turned into darkness, piety became a task, and degenerated into a formal and incessant round of unmeaning frivolities. The stake and the faggot on the heath; the rack and screw in the dungeon; the open recantation and secret confession; the bead-counting devotion; the self-inflicted lashings and fleshly lacerations to expiate sin; the rigorous fastings, or sumptuous fast-day dinners; the solemn procession, or the solitary pilgrimage; the purchased absolutions; holy days, (sixty-eight to the year) instead of holy men; bodily labor identified with godliness; all, all betoken and bespeak the papal yoke. The Church, destitute of the "true light," was *black*; and he who ruled over it, held it in bondage under his yoke.

Let us now briefly notice the guardian angel of popery, "the third beast;" and then pass to the next verse of the text.

At the opening of the first four seals, one of the four beasts which John saw in his vision, said to him, successively, "Come and see." Religion seems to be the office and charge of these living creatures, and each, in his order, seems to have manifested a new form of it on earth. The first beast who called to John, on the opening of the first seal, was "like a lion;" representing the "Lion of the

tribe of Judah," the royal nobility and certain conquest of Christianity. The second beast, the guardian spirit of Mohammedanism, was "like a calf;" representing the proper character of that religion, especially its gross sensuality. Mohammed was so gross in his very mind, that he measured the dignity of angels by their bulk, and the distance between their eyes; and so debased in his conduct, that he needed a special revelation from his fancied heaven to sanction his impurities. There are boasts concerning him which delicacy is ashamed to mention, such as best mark the brute; and his religion is so sensual, that the paradise which it promises is but a pasture of beasts.

The "third beast," the guardian angel of popery, "had a face as a man;" and in the religion symbolized under this seal, and appropriated to him, a *man*, a real man, "magnifies himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped." And to this hour, when he is enthroned, even cardinals doff their hats and bow down in adoration before him;—"the man of sin," in scripture phrase, under whose influence the pure religion of Jesus has been transformed into *blackness*; while the yoke of his human authority has become supreme over the subjugated minds of his degraded vassals.

The symbol of popery in our text, the black horse, is not described as the other two. Nothing is here told, literally, concerning it; nothing is seen but the horse, its color, the rider, the yoke; but, unlike the others, a voice is heard in the midst of the four beasts. Popery is connected with every form of religion. Hence it is that the voice comes from the four living creatures that successively, one by one, call on John to see each religion in its own specific form. Popery is the corrupted and perverted form of Christianity; not another religion, like

Mohammedanism, but an apostacy from the true faith. Therefore, after the third beast said, "Come and see," the prophet beheld the black horse with his rider, yoke in hand, nothing more; nor did the living creature show him anything further; but he "heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny." That is, a quart for seven pence. In that time and country, one meal for the price of a day's labor.

Nothing can more clearly denote a time of scarcity and sore famine, than measuring wheat and barley by the quart, and selling them at such a price. And as the symbolic description here given refers to religion, spiritual famine must be intended. If we compare spiritual things with spiritual, scripture with scripture, according to the "analogy of faith," one single ray of light, from the realms of truth, chases away the seeming obscurity that shrouds this scenic representation, and the prophetic language of emblem becomes plain truth. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land; not a *famine of bread*, nor a thirst for water, but of *hearing the words of the Lord*." Wherever the black horse, with his rider and yoke, has kept the field, there has ever been such a famine as this. The seclusion of God's word from the people has ever been a practical part of the popish system. Under its workings the granary of truth was sealed up by the very hands that should have dispensed abroad its ample stores, like nourishment for the famished dying throughout the world. But, instead of the broad-cast dispersion of God's truth, food for the souls of men was doled out in the smallest portions, short extracts selected by the clergy, inserted in the missals; so that the scarcity, dearth, and "famine of hearing the words of the Lord" were such, as fully explain the import of the figure in the text, as

descriptive of religion in a spiritual sense, "a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny."

When Martin Luther, a monk twenty years of age, in the library of the University at Erfurth, laid his hand on the Bible for the first time in his life, a rare book unknown at that time, "he was filled with astonishment at finding more in this volume than those fragments which *the Church* had selected to be read to the people every Sunday in the year." Till then, he had thought they were the whole word of God. And so many pages, so many chapters, so many books, of which he had no idea! This old neglected Book, lying in dust on the unknown shelves of a library room, flashed light into his mind, becomes bread to his famished soul, and the Book of Life to a whole dying nation. The Reformation lay hid in that Bible.

While popery produced "a famine of hearing the words of the Lord," it made a feast of sacraments; and the effect was spiritual death. And this will always be the effect when sacraments are made every thing and preaching nothing.

Perhaps the time has come, when the great principles and doctrines of the Reformation from popery are to be re-examined and discussed anew. In the fierce commotion of polemic disputation, it is in the highest degree proper that every Christian should be well grounded and firmly fixed in the rudiments of our holy religion; and that every minister be completely armed and equipped for the strife. If the great battle is to be fought over again, the contest will be, as formerly, between light and darkness—liberty and bondage—truth and tradition—power and form—Spirit and ordinances—preaching and sacraments—Divine and creature merit—faith and works—the

religion of Jesus and the religion of man—Protestantism and Popery.

“The word of God is the sword of the Spirit.” The truth of God, written or unwritten—for truth is eternal and exists independent of writing—is the great instrument which the Spirit uses in saving the world. Truth, either in its written form, or without it—not mathematical, not physical, not philosophical, but revealed, Divine, spiritual truth.

The *visible* hand by which the Spirit wields this instrument, is a duly authorized ministry of living spiritual men. Better thus than it would have been in the hands of angels. Man, spiritually taught, knows his fellow man, and can approach him without inspiring that awe by which he would be overwhelmed through the ministry of more mysterious natures.

But was this ministry designed to wield the truth through THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS, OR BY PREACHING THE GOSPEL? The Roman Catholics, Modern Papists, Puseyites, high toned Episcopalians, Campbellites, and Mormons, so far as the two sects last named have any ministry at all, *seem* at least, to make the Sacraments the *sources* of Divine grace—the *instrumental* agency of remission and regeneration. They *seem* to represent the preaching of the Gospel as the means of persuading men that God has appointed the Sacraments to *convey* the merit of Christ's death to the soul for the pardon of sin, and spiritual purification. But this notion is the offspring of a human theory, and not the truth of God; it is the very quintessence of popery in its mildest and most witching form. Did I know that the shadow of doubt rested upon the truth of this statement, so far as any one acquainted with the subject is concerned, I would appeal to the law and to the

testimony for its proof. But, surely, such appeal cannot be necessary here.

As to the Sacrament of Baptism; when administered to adults, it was to follow the preaching of the Gospel, and faith in Christ. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," is a standing, unrepealed, and unrepeatable law of Gospel truth. Then it is evident, if Baptism follows faith, and comes to save, it comes too late, for the work is already done.

Of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but little is said in the New Testament. The three evangelists record the fact of its institution as a *memorial* of Christ's death; Paul speaks of it by special revelation; and it is incidentally alluded to twice or thrice in the "Acts of the Apostles;" but no where is it represented as *conveying* the grace of pardon and purification to the soul. I would not derogate aught from the Holy Sacraments. They are two great monuments by which Christianity is distinguished. Baptism is the elder monument, built upon the fact of our *own* "death in sins," and on the equally broad truth, that we need a quickening, a rising to a new life, and cleansing of moral nature by the Holy Spirit, which it symbolizes. From this base it towers upward, till lost in the glories of our physical regeneration from the corruptions of the grave.

The Lord's Supper is the younger, but more solemn sister—a monument rearing itself evermore from amid the sad shades of Gethsemane and Calvary; and gathering most of its sublime impressions from the light that plays around its summit. It is built on the mighty fact of Christ's death as a sacrifice for sin; and on the equally mighty truth, that "in him alone we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Rising from such a base, it lifts away its towering pinnacle till

lost in the profound upward depths of that light which it pierces before the throne, the light of the saint's blessed life for evermore. Whoever, therefore, takes the Sacrament for the Saviour, the sign for the thing signified, the water for the Spirit, the bread and wine for the body and blood of Jesus, greatly errs, knowing neither the Scripture nor the power of God.

Baptismal regeneration is a popish tradition, and not a Bible truth, that gained currency among men in proportion as the Gospel ceased to be preached. The doctrine that remission of sins is *conveyed* by the Sacrament of the Eucharist, is a kindred error with the monstrous absurdity of the "real presence." It is a stream from that great fountain—error. Every where through the Bible, the pardon of sin is seen to depend on the shedding of the blood of atonement, through faith in that blood; every where we see outward rites pointing us to this great central truth of Christianity; but no where in the Bible are we taught, that the pardon of sin is conveyed by these rites. Paul says, "The same sacrifices were offered oftentimes, which *can never take away sins*—by *one* offering Christ hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified—we have redemption through his blood even the forgiveness of sins. And where remission of these is, there remaineth *no more offering for sin*." Jesus *finished* the atonement; and if finished, it cannot be continued or repeated.

The doctrine of Sacramental remission puts pardons into the hands of Bishops and Priests, and quiets the ungodly in their sins, under the soothing thought that, if they may not purchase a pardon with money in a mass, they may at least drink it with "their ransom" from a chalice. This is its tendency, as the history of the world proves. Christ makes the Sacrament a symbol, an indice

to point men to himself; this error makes it a blind to screen him the more effectually from view. "Whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins." The Sacrament, then, is neither the *procuring* nor the *instrumental* cause of pardon. No: for then the word of God, which declares that "whosoever believeth shall be saved," would be false. For many have believed, who had no access to the Sacraments. And every such one is saved; not by chance, not by possibility, or peradventure, but by promise under the oath of the Covenant, whether within or without "the pale of the visible Church;" and not saved by the "uncovenanted mercies of God" either. God has but *one* revealed way of extending remission of sins to man; this *one way* necessarily excludes every other way; and this one way is marked out thus: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The "real presence" theory is a slight modification of transubstantiation; and teaches that Jesus left in the Sacrament a miraculous incarnation of himself, so that absent to sight he would still be present in substance; which is but another incarnation of himself in a *new form*, no longer flesh and blood, but bread and wine, endowed once for all with spirit and life, and the power of communicating himself in a perpetual succession to his people! To this dogma of the *scholastic* theology of Rome, Luther partially returned, even after he had openly divorced himself from that theology on the doctrine of justification by faith. He gave up transubstantiation, but retained the notion of the real presence; and said he would rather receive the mere *blood* with the Pope, than the mere *wine* with Zuingli. This feature of "the beast," incorporated into his creed, marred its beauty, retarded

the progress of the Reformation, and was the cause of much distress to its votaries. Ecolampadius, writing to Zuinglé, says: "The dogma of the 'real presence' is the fortress and stronghold of their (papist) impiety; so long as they cleave to this *idol*, none can overcome them." Such a theory could only be produced by the working of sense and imagination, under the *black* power of an old crazy superstition, seeking to defend itself and the monstrous birth of its own horrid offspring against reason, Revelation, and remonstrance. The credulity that dares not question the truth of such an absurd theory, is the sum of all fanaticism, the inborn result of a superstitious mind, awed and prostrated into passive submission by the overmastering prerogative of a base and designing priesthood.

The primary and true nature of the Eucharist is pointed out in these words, "Do this in remembrance of me." It is a Divinely appointed *memorial* of Christ's death. He left not himself *in* the memorial, but a memorial *of* himself. In doing this he acted with a plain and wise reference to one of the most deep-laid, and powerful principles of our nature, that through which *love* seeks to keep the absent in mind, by asking or giving tokens of affection. He gave a token that every enlightened Christian would be sure to understand and *feel*. He knew that wherever this memorial-token of his death should be seen by spiritual Christians, amid the solemnities of his own true worship, it would bring the bodily absent Saviour to mind, and quicken love; that it would awaken the best affections of the soul; and that this death-recording rite, this sacred pledge, would gather around its absent Giver, the holiest, the sweetest feelings of the believing hearts of his people; whose love would cluster, glow, and mingle, as they realized, with freshened

vividness, the beauties and glories of his once marred, and broken, but now radiant form, in connection with the great work of their own wondrous redemption.

That the Apostles so understood it, is evident from their references to it, which we find recorded in the New Testament. Before Superstition, with her transforming touch, had wrought up a simple Divinely appointed memorial into an unutterable mystery, they gather around it no words of dark and awful import; but simply name it the "Lord's table—the communion of the body and blood of Christ." But Superstition came and hung her unholy inventions upon the monument Jesus left of himself in his Church; she hung the beautiful shaft, which had stood for centuries in the native majesty of its original simplicity, with withered weeds, night-shade, and hemlock, inscribed upon its pedestal THIS IS THE SAVIOUR, and then wove around it thick spells of darkness. And now it is a matter of profoundest wonder, considering the work which truth has wrought in stripping this monument of its disfiguring ornaments and heathenish appendages, that any one in our Protestant country, should be found trying to weave around it once more the fearful covering of mystery and miracle; to shroud again, in terrible pomp, this blessed memorial of our Saviour's death and sacrifice for sin!

Let us, my brethren, keep this Sacred Ordinance free from the thick veil with which the "real presence" covers it; and tear away every shred and patch of the awful robes in which it is thus designed to dress it. Disencumbered and left as Christ left it, and as we find it in the Bible, the Lord's table commends itself to the Christian's highest esteem and most reverent affections, as every way worthy its Author and end. Then whenever we approach it, we perform a kind of spiritual pilgrimage

across the wide desert of time, which ends in bringing us out upon the holy ground whereon the Son of Man was crucified for our sins; and leaves us kneeling there, where myriads have bowed before with adoring hearts, around that sublimely solemn and imperishable monument erected on the triple plinth of the *fact, date, and design* of Christ's atoning sacrifice.

Having adverted to the Sacraments, as instituted by Christ, let us turn our attention a moment to what is said of *preaching*.

The fact that Christ is called the "Word of God," has in it a deep and meaning emphasis. It indicates that the truth uttered or acted out by himself, is the great means by which, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, he designs to save lost men. The main labor of his ministry was preaching the Gospel; that he might prepare his followers to understand and receive the offering of himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. This sacrifice is the great burden of his Gospel, the crowning act of his ministry; yet in the act itself he spent a few hours only, while in preparing for it by preaching the Gospel, he consumed whole years. So soon as he entered on his work, "Jesus began to *preach*. He went about *preaching*."

Again: the twelve were chosen from the beginning, that they might listen to his preaching, witness his miracles and death, and be qualified to preach themselves. The various commissions which the Apostles received, were commissions to preach the Gospel. Their high mandate ran thus: "And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out devils." Preaching was their *chief* work, miracles their *incidental* work.

The second commission was still more emphatic. "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach on the house-tops."

In the third commission, this *chief* work stands highest and foremost. "And Jesus said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." And to this last finished commission is added, by way of historical comment, "And they went forth and *preached everywhere*, the *Lord working with them*, and confirming the word with signs following."

And when the Master had ascended to heaven, having left the broad mantle of his authority on the office of the Gospel ministry, the first preachers gave themselves up entirely to the execution of their high commission. Peter, John, Stephen, Philip, Paul, Barnabas, and Apollos, were "mighty in the Scriptures;" and when scattered abroad by persecution, "they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ, and daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus. They went everywhere preaching the word."

In all this we see that the great burden of the labors of the first Gospel ministers was just what we should expect from the tenor of their commission; not the administration of Sacraments, but preaching Jesus and him crucified, as the only Saviour of men, through faith in his name. The Apostles themselves took this same view of their work. The Apostle Paul, addressing the elders of the Church, says: "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus

Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, That bonds and afflictions abide me. I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore, I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." Not one word about his ever having administered a Sacrament; yet he had declared "all the counsel of God"—had done his whole duty, and was pure from the "blood of all men." Take that most remarkable passage in Corinthians: "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel. And my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

The points that we have now reached are these: *First*, The Sacraments were not designed to convey life and pardon to the soul, but were designed as symbols and outward representatives of the results of Gospel truth and of the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. *Secondly*, The preaching of the Gospel was the great and only work in which the first ministers wore out their lives, as the instrumentality which the Holy Ghost makes effectual for the salvation of sinners, not by persuading them that God has appointed the Sacraments to convey life, pardon, and purity to the soul, but bringing them to repentance toward God and faith in Christ. Let us keep these points of doctrine before the people; remembering that eternal life or death to ourselves and others must be the issue of the effort we make.

It is, however, not to be inferred, that those who hold this view of the importance of preaching, ascribe its

efficiency to the human power of the preacher. Some have fallen into this error. To make either preaching or the Sacraments *the source* of saving Grace, exalts the human power which wields them into a God. In either case, the preacher takes the place of the Holy Spirit, and uses the preaching, or the Sacrament, as an *instrument* by which *he* saves the sinner. All saving power resides in God; human power is nothing in either. In preaching, the *man* is put out of view behind the commission he bears. The preacher should present Christ as he would a large picture, so that the congregation may not even see the ends of his fingers. I would then guard against the error of relying exclusively on preaching for success. The tendency of this error is toward the multiplication of human artifices, management, and trick, for the immediate and enlarged effect of the ministry. I would have no art but simplicity; no argument but truth; no power but of God; no unction but from the Holy One; no flashing fire but from the true altar. The majesty of the Gospel disdains all misdirected artifices of human wit to give it effect; nor does it need the gaudy trappings of human rhetoric, or the idle flourishes of theatrical eloquence, to give it the finishing touch. There is a growing disposition in our hearers to run after popular men and popular measures; to find and feast on something novel or dainty, rather than to seek for the simplicity of truth, and the power of God in the appointed services of the sanctuary. Shall we basely pander to their vitiated appetites, and give them a Gospel moulded after the fashion and imbued with the licentious literature of this jovial age; or shall we take "the sword of the Spirit," and hew their sickly sentimentality and errors to pieces? Shall we feed them with the flowers on the papered walls of the dining-room, or give them the "bread of life?"

The Gospel minister is rightly to divide the word of truth; to separate it into its several offices; to point the arrows of its power and make them sharp in the heart of the King's enemies. When this great work ceased during the middle ages, and the two simple Sacraments, instituted by the Head of the Church, were artificially converted into sources of Grace and Saviours of sinners, moral blackness, bondage, famine, and death held an unbroken sway over down-trodden millions. Five other Sacraments were added to these two, framed out of the most abused and perverted things. Soon this whole cluster of corrupted and multiplied Sacraments had come to be regarded with superstitious awe, as though, by a miraculous charm, they imparted new life and holiness to all who received them. Meanwhile, the Scriptures were locked up in dead languages, unknown to the people, and almost unknown to the lower order of the clergy. Oral tradition was the law, and its expounder and minister the spiritual despotism of the hierarchy. The ritual of the Church became excessively cumbrous with silly rites, and religion was supposed to consist in a strict observance of its forms, and to have so little to do with private virtues of character, that one was reputed remarkably holy, while, to the knowledge of all men, he was scandalously immoral. The "black horse," with his rider and yoke, kept the field, spiritual famine reigned, and the cry, "A measure of wheat for a penny," pealed over clergy and people.

The great Reformation from Popery had its origin in the secret study of the Scriptures by the Augustine Monk, and was carried on by the public preaching of the Gospel, thus brought again to the knowledge and experience of the preacher. The soldiers of Christ brought again from their armory the long unused sword

of the Spirit; they drew it bright and gleaming from its rusty scabbard, trained themselves to its use, and successfully wielded it in the great work for which it was designed. Then again "it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believed." Soon preaching came into eager requisition; and the rider on the black horse, seeing, if it were not discontinued, his yoke would be broken, tried to suppress it. Dungeons were opened; faggots piled; fires kindled; the Vatican thundered; blood streamed; demons yelled; martyrs shouted and fell; but, amidst all, the word of God ran and was glorified.

Notwithstanding all this, even in the view of heaven, as when John in prophetic vision saw the "black horse," and heard the cry, "A measure of wheat for a penny," there was something precious on earth, and God had given a charge respecting it, "*See thou hurt not the oil and the wine.*"

When David had prepared a place for the ark of the Lord, and had set it in the midst of the tent which he had pitched for it, in the Psalm which he delivered into the hands of Asaph, he thus calls on the house of Israel: "Be mindful, always, of the Covenant of the Lord, which he had commanded to a thousand generations, even the Covenant which he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac, and hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting Covenant, saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance; when ye were but few, even a few, and strangers in it. And when they went from nation to nation, and from one kingdom to another people, he suffered no man to do them wrong; yea he reprov'd kings for their sakes, saying, *Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.*" Here

God's charge and reproofs, given to kings, concerning his anointed ones and prophets, coupled with the mention of the Covenant made with Abraham, even the *everlasting* Covenant, commanded for *a thousand generations*, seems to have a higher reference and significancy than pertains to the merely temporal blessings of his people, and may serve to explain the meaning of the words in the text, "See thou hurt not the oil and the wine"—"touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."

Furthermore, it is said of the "two witnesses," that shall prophecy twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth, "if any man will *hurt* them, fire proceedeth out of their mouths and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will *hurt* them, he must in this manner *be killed*." The charge not to harm or hurt, and the threatening of death to those who should kill them, corresponds with the charge given to the Pope in the text, "See thou hurt not." The appointed *time* during which God's people were to be tried, corresponds with the twelve hundred and sixty days of prophecying in sackcloth by the anointed ones and witnesses of Jesus. Whatever of mortal suffering, that which was precious in the sight of Heaven was not to be hurt. "They may *slay* me," said Paul, "but they **CANNOT HURT ME**." In a natural sense, they might be killed; but, in a spiritual sense, they were not to be hurt. As from the treading of the wine-press, the *wine* is not hurt or destroyed, but flows more freely, though the very lees be wrung out, and comes pure from the hand of the refiner; as from the olive the *oil* is not hurt, but exudes by the heat of the sun or fire, or by the strong compression of the substance which contains it; so persecution would but purify the saints who keep the testimony of Jesus, whatever they may suffer. They are precious in the sight of the Lord,

as are oil and wine among men. As such they are not to be hurt. Though, in a human sense, they may be injured, and even slain; yet their blood will be avenged. Of them it is said to the rider on the black horse, "Touch not mine anointed ones—do my prophets, my witnesses *who preach*, no harm—see thou hurt not the oil and the wine."

Soon after the ascension of Jesus, Christianity was propagated throughout the civilized world by the preaching of the Gospel, nourished by the blood of martyrs, and kept pure through suffering, under the persecuting power of *pagan* Rome. The elevation of Constantine to the throne, and his conversion to Christianity, delivered God's people from the spirit of pagan persecution, and gave outward peace to the Church. But when a smile from a throne, in lieu of a death of martyrdom, awaited a convert to the Christian faith, the spirit of the world crept into the Church, and the cause of truth was injured rather than aided by nominal converts and worldly men. Nearly the whole Church was again corrupted by prosperity, as it had been previously purified by tribulation. No sooner were Christians delivered from their heathen adversaries, than they began to persecute one another. The character of the Roman power having been changed from pagan to Christian, by the conversion of the Emperor, gradually grew up into a spiritual despotism; and its officers became lords over God's heritage. Those who were the reputed guardians of the Gospel of peace, copying the example of the blind idolators of heathen Rome, strove to maintain Christianity by the very means that had been tried in vain to destroy it. Persecution for conscience's sake revived in another form; *papal* instead of *pagan*. The Roman power in another form, *Christian* instead of *heathen*, maintained its domineering ascendancy; and those who adhered to the genuine truth of the Gospel, as first

preached to the saints and sealed with the blood of martyrs, were slaughtered, burnt, imprisoned, and tortured in every way the malice of man or fiend could invent. All this had its origin in that "famine of hearing the words of the Lord," which the man on the black horse brought over the land. Such times of trial and persecution marked the ushering in, and advance of the Reformation; and that they continued from age to age, is a truth too prominent and glaring to be questioned or disguised. It is not the *bloodless* triumphs of the Gospel of peace, of which we read in the history of *the Church*, so called, but grossly misnamed; rather does it seem a transcript of the records from the archives of Pandamonium. The right to persecute those unto death who advocated doctrines drawn from Scripture, and held to that Divine authority as the only and sufficient rule of faith and practice, was openly maintained and unsparingly exercised. The people of God who would not be coerced by it, fell; indeed, they lost their lives by *pressure* and *fire*; but they were not *hurt*, for their tribulation wrought the triumph of their faith. The fall of every martyr spread dismay through all the legions of the destroyer, and struck like a death blow upon the head of their haughty and malignant leader. The feet of the "black horse," set upon the bodies of many of the saints, stamped them into powder; but could not annihilate one lonely particle. He could tread down and disperse, but had no power to arrest that re-producing process by which the ashes of one martyr produced a thousand more; a process which caused the valleys and mountains to stand thick with a harvest of saints already ripe for the heavenly garner.

To you, my brethren in the ministry, is committed the Gospel of the grace of God, as the great instrument of enlightening and saving the world. Through this

instrument, wielded by a called, holy, living ministry, the Holy Spirit operates upon the great mass of surrounding evil, working good in the midst of it. Here is the conflict of light with darkness, truth with error, purity with corruption. During the strife between elements of such utter contrariety and irreconcilable hostility, for long ages, darkness seemed to be victorious; and true religion not only apparently vanquished, but almost actually extinct. Nevertheless, in the written form which God gave to his word, its integrity has been preserved; and in the living ministry which he has kept up by his wondrous providence, a perpetual security both to the instrument and the visible hand by which it is wielded, holds forth the certainty of a final triumph in favor of his cause. It may be believed, that the Gospel will always remain pure and uncorrupt in itself, giving out its power, till truth shall everywhere prevail, the world yield to its sway, and all human things settle down into the peaceful calm of light and love. But the Church, in all her departments and members, must first be freed from all corruption, and kept pure, until her influence shall be felt as simply benign. Then she shall become a widening circle of lights, radiating truth from Christ, her central blaze of glory, through her ministry, whom his right hand upholds; and then all her ordinances, as "mysteries" committed to her stewardship, shall be seen to operate, not in the darkly confounding prodigies of alleged perpetual miracle, but in the simple richness of that light of knowledge and of life, which, as through all her ministries, so also through all her symbols, shineth from her glorified Head.

When primitive Christianity arose in its native purity, white as the unsunned snow, it went forth conquering and to conquer; it gained strength from one victory to achieve another; error fell before it; paganism, as if smitten by

an invisible hand, forsook its shrine; darkness receded before its advancing light; bulwark, tower, and temple crumbled. Mohammedanism, red as the blood-stained murderer, came forth with a great sword to make war upon it; and then popery, dark as the blackest midnight, turned against it. And, among all the enemies that Christianity ever had, or has now, in her warfare on earth, popery is the very worst. And shall we make peace with popery? It has tried to reduce Christianity to a religion of forms, ceremonies, and sacraments, Christian in name only; it has perverted, mutilated, disguised, deformed, and overlaid true religion with corrupt additions. I know that popery does not exercise the uncontrolled sway it once did. Its harsher features may be seemingly softened. The thunders of the Vatican are no longer a terror, but a jest. Yet still popery, by the use it once made of its power, has left, in the history of the world, impressions of its true character, which no sophistry can disguise, which no time can efface, and which are so closely fitted to its prophet symbol, that *blackness* is still its appropriate designation, and *bondage* its prominent characteristic. Remember its taunting boast, that it *never changes*. Then, according to its own infallibility, it is the same popery that was degraded, loathed, and cast out to utter abhorrence by our fathers; the same in haughty intolerance which, in other days, lorded it over God's heritage. The same popery, that built its throne on the necks of men, and environed it by a lake of human blood; that crushed civil liberty, and slew the saints of God. Shall we make peace with popery? By the blood and memory of martyrs which it has slaughtered, by the ashes of those who fell in the fires it kindled, by the dust of the thousands of saints it has scattered to the winds, we are entreated, urged, conjured, commanded, to stand fast

against its encroachments; to quit us like men of God, to be staunch, unyielding, invincible, unwearied in defence of the doctrines of the uncorrupt Gospel of Jesus Christ. Oh! let the glorified spirits of martyred worthies, who counted not their lives dear to them while contending in the same noble strife, but fought to the last sigh they drew, as they gaze down upon you from their lofty citadel of triumph, mark your earnestness and incessant toil in contending for "the faith once delivered to the saints," and in bringing sinners to trust in that Mediator alone, through whom they ascended on high. Mighty group! ye died not in vain. We will bind ourselves by the name of him who liveth for ever, to strive to preserve, unimpaired, the blessings and privileges bequeathed to us at such a cost; and as we have received the charter of our faith and freedom stained with the blood of the holiest and the best, rather than hand it down to those who may come after us, torn, mutilated, and blackened, we will dye it afresh in the tide of our own veins!

Let others make peace with popery, if they will; let them enshrine it in their Churches, plant it in their families, and receive it into their hearts. Let them adopt, if they will, its modified errors—baptismal regeneration—eucharistic remission—diocesan succession from St. Peter. Let them if they will, place the Sacraments above preaching, rear up theological seminaries to manufacture men-made ministers, light their candles, read prayers, make their priesthood a sinecure, and dress it in papal robe and surplice; but here is a company of men, every one of whom I can pledge to the maintenance of the doctrine of justification by faith alone—spiritual regeneration by the Holy Ghost—entire holiness of heart and life as essential to the enjoyment of God now and for ever—preachers, not priests; laborers, not drones; men of one

book, of one work. Go on, ye men of God! in your work of faith and labor of love. The triumph of the rider on the black horse shall end. The same hand which described him when he first appeared in prophetic vision, also penned the decree of his overthrow, and wrote down his doom. Already the light of the Gospel, undimmed by the clouds of canons, councils, and fathers, is gleaming upon the gloom of ages and the gloom of millions. Already disorder and confusion are in the camps and ranks of the trained legions and long enslaved minions of darkness; while the world is fast freeing itself from the papal yoke, which, for successive centuries, has held the souls of myriads in the debasing vassalage of absolute despotism.

Oh! may the light continue to shine in spreading splendor, till the glory shall be upon the cottage and palace, the valley and mountain, the earth and the ocean; till nunneries and inquisitions—the harem of the priest, the prison for the heretic, shall moulder into dust; the yoke be broken from off every neck, and the black horse plunged into the native shades of his own murky den, leaving the world free from the curse of the “man of sin,” to feed joyfully on the bread of life, without measure or price; and leaving the Church standing forth in vestal purity, with celestial beauty around, and the glory of God in the midst, till the plaudit and gracious welcome shall proceed from the Great White Throne, “WELL DONE GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANTS! ENTER INTO THE JOY OF YOUR LORD.”

SERMON XX.

ON THE JUSTIFICATION AND CORONATION OF THE MESSIAH.

BY REV. A. CAMPBELL

Of Bethany, Virginia.

"Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified by the Spirit, seen by angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up to glory."—1 Tim. iii. 16.

"But we see Jesus, who for a little while, was made less than the angels, that by the grace of God he might taste of death for all, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor."—Heb. ii. 9

THE destiny of a man, a nation, an empire, a world, is sometimes suspended, and consequent upon a single event. On one act of one man, God, in his infinite wisdom and benevolence suspended the entire destinies of the world.

There is but one centre in every circle; one centre in the solar system; one centre in the universe; and one central idea in nature, providence, and redemption. Around that idea the physical, the intellectual, the moral, the spiritual universe revolves. If God delights in number, in variety, in magnitude, as the universe attests; he also delights in simplicity, in individuality, and in unity. Hence, one law is but the result of the centripetal and centrifugal forces of the universe. And from the

continual antagonism of these forces, arise all the order, the beauty, the life, and the happiness of all the empires of creation.

But to man—fallen, ruined man, to his dim vision, in this murky atmosphere, notwithstanding all its order, harmony, and beauty, the universe, at his peculiar angle of observation, appears as “a maze without a plan.” He sees an alternation of light and darkness; of good and evil; of beauty and deformity; of pleasure and of pain; of life and death. Jaundiced with sin, to his moral visual the evil transcends the good; corruption and decay luxuriate on youth and beauty; adversity treads upon the heels of prosperity; death and the grave triumph over all. While, to the enlightened eye of faith and hope, God, in nature, in providence, in grace, is only “from seeming evil still educing good, and better still, and better thence again in infinite progression.” Sin, indeed, has reigned even to death, and to the desolations of the grave; but grace reigns to eternal life, and glory, and blessedness, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We thank God there were two Adams. Adam the first, and Adam the second. If, by Adam the first, came sin and death into our world; by Adam the second, have come righteousness and life. If, in our relation to the first, we toil, and sicken, and die; in our relation to the second, we repose, we convalesce, and live for ever. If, by the first, we have lost Eden and life; by the second, we gain heaven and immortality. If, through one man, “sin has reigned even to death;” through another man, grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. Truly, then, with Paul, in our text, we exclaim, “Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified by the Spirit, attended by angels, announced by prophets and apostles to the nations,

believed on in the world—by Jew and Greek, and finally glorified in heaven.”

Of the few predicates in the passage concerning the Messiah, so distinctly enunciated by the Apostle, as constituting the great mystery of godliness, and of redemption, we select but one, for our present consideration, edification, and comfort.

Before stating our present theme, we must premise a remark or two on the term *mystery*, or on the phrase “*mystery of godliness*.”

The term *mystery*, does not always, in its broadest sense, indicate something incomprehensible. If that were its uniform acceptation, Paul spoke amiss, when he said, “Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” &c. This was once a mystery, but it is not now a mystery. In other words it was once a secret; but it is not now a secret. Formerly, the condition of those living on the earth, when the Lord would come, was not known. It was then incomprehensible; but it is not so now. The gospel itself was a mystery, while indicated only in types, and figures, and prophecy; but now it is a mystery revealed. The calling of the Gentiles, in the same sense, was a mystery, hid and kept secret for ages; but is no longer a mystery. “It was given to the apostles to know the mysteries of God”—secrets hid from ages and generations, but now divulged.*

There are yet mysteries unrevealed, concerning “the Man of Sin,” and the fortunes of the world; but, in Christianity and the gospel, what were formerly mysteries, are mysteries no more. To call things, that

* Mark iv. 11.

are simply incomprehensible, mysteries, is to extend the word beyond our text, and to make every thing a mystery: for, indeed, there is nothing that we can fully comprehend.* We cannot comprehend the union of body and soul, in our own person; much less the union of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in one God. But the mystery of godliness is not a mystery of that class. It is a mystery, developed and revealed by the Holy Spirit. If, then, any one be ignorant of this mystery, the sin lies upon himself. As Paul says, "Let him be ignorant," presuming it to be voluntary.

To many, I fear, this single item embraced in my subject, is still a mystery unrevealed, or a secret unknown. Let me, then, ask, and let every one who hear, ask himself, what means the declaration, "Jesus was justified by the Spirit." I am told, that it is not *the* spirit; but *spirit*, in contrast with *flesh*; as both these terms, *flesh* and *spirit*, are found in the original Greek text, without the definite article. Literally, it is alledged, the original reads, "God was manifest in flesh, justified in Spirit, seen by angels;" and, it might be added, in the same style of criticism, "preached in nations, believed in world, received up in glory; or, "in a world, and in a glory." This is, in truth, hypercriticism, as unsound as uncouth. When, and in what manner, was God justified in Spirit—by whom, or by what spirit?

Griesbach gives another reading, which sound criticism and the context approve. It has not, indeed, a majority of ancient manuscripts, now known, to sanction it; but some other genuine and approved readings have not. It is, however, one which the context and the facts of the case approve. It is read, "He who was manifest in

* Romans xi. 25. 1 Cor. xv.

the flesh,"* (namely, God, in the person of Jesus) "was justified by the Spirit." The work of the Holy Spirit, primarily, is to testify of Christ, or, that "*Jesus is the Christ*;"—to sustain his pretensions, to prove his mission; and thereby to *convict* (not merely to convince,) the world of sin, in rejecting him, and to *convince* (not to convict) the world of righteousness—his righteousness against the calumnies and the condemnation of his enemies. It was not the human, or personal Spirit of Jesus that justified him. It was the Spirit of God that justified all his pretensions, against all the false charges and calumnies of the world.

But the task which we now assume, is to develop the most important item of the *mystery of godliness*, namely, That the subject of this proposition, whether read, "God was manifest in the flesh," or "He who was manifest in the flesh," "*was justified by the Holy Spirit*." In any case, there are but five predicates of the subject of the proposition, unless we suppose the mystery of godliness itself was the subject of the proposition. Should this be assumed, then we have six predicates—"God manifest in the flesh," would be the first; "Justified by the Spirit," the second. But, does the term *justify*, apply to a *person*, or a *proposition*? "Seen by angels," is the third predicate. But was a mystery, or a person, *seen* by angels? &c. "Preached to the Gentiles," the fourth. "Believed on in the world," the fifth. These scarcely apply to a *mystery*; rather to a *person*. "Received up to glory," the sixth item. But, was the mystery of godliness taken up into heaven?

It must, then, be conceded, that the words, "*God manifest in the flesh*," are the *subject* of the proposition. Of the

* *Hos* for *Theos*.

five grand predicates concerning him, we have selected the first named, as essentially fundamental to his favorable reception on earth; and, ultimately, to his coronation, as LORD OF ALL in heaven.

The present enquiry is, What is the import of the fact affirmed in the words, "*Justified by the Spirit?*" To develop this fact, in its Scriptural import and bearings, is of transcendent importance. Its standing at the head of the sublime predicates of the Lord Jesus; and, if any one please, at the head of the grand mystery of godliness, obviously suggests its primary importance.

In conducting the mind of a Bible student in such an inquiry as that proposed, it would seem expedient:—

I. To indicate the meaning of the word *justify*.

II. To inquire into its appositeness to the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. To ascertain the time, place, and the circumstances of his justification.

IV. The consequence thence resulting in his coronation, as Lord of all, and the commencement of his reign.

I. To indicate the meaning of the term *justify*, it must be observed, that it is a *forensic* term. It implies, that a person has been accused; that an issue has been formed; and that the allegations have been heard, examined, and satisfactorily refuted, before a competent tribunal. In consequence of which, the accused is officially pronounced *not guilty*, legally righteous, and absolved from all blame in the affair.

But, there is evangelical as well as legal justification. There is justification by grace, as well as justification by law. It is, therefore, important, in this case, to appreciate fully the difference between legal or forensic justification, and justification by grace, or favor. In the latter, there

must have been the guilt of transgression, else the accused could not have been justified by favor. In legal justification, the accused must have been proved to be innocent: In evangelical justification, the justified must have been proved to be guilty. It follows, then, that justification, by grace, is only equivalent to pardon, or forgiveness. It is called justification, merely, because the party thus justified, is treated as though he were innocent of the guilt alleged and proved. Hence, it is said, "To him that believeth on him who *justifies the ungodly*, his faith is counted to him for righteousness." But who dare say, that he who was "God manifest in the flesh, was justified by grace! He was holy, harmless, and undefiled by sin, and purer than the heavens, that only witnessed sin.

But there is, besides the legal and evangelical sense of the term justify, a figurative use of the word. Jesus was accused of hypocrisy, as pretending to be God, while, as they alleged, he was no more than man. He was accused of imposture, and of being leagued with "the prince of demons," He assumed to be *the Son of God*, in its true, literal, and unfigurative sense. And because he was audibly and visibly recognized at his baptism, by a voice from heaven, declaring him to be truly and literally God's only begotten and well-beloved Son, and, by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon his head, identified and visibly marked out as the person to whom the oracles of Jehovah applied, it may be alleged, that he was justified from such imputations by the Holy Spirit. But, at most, this was only private and figurative, being without formal trial, accusation, and while he was merely acting out the duties of a prophet. It does not meet the case of legal evangelical justification, indicated by Paul, when

the Lord Jesus had passed a final, and formal trial. Paul makes the declaration in our text, after he had been accused, tried, and condemned to die, by both the ecclesiastic or sacerdotal, and the political tribunal under whose supervision and judicature he had spent his life.

This will appear more striking and conclusive, from a careful perusal of his valedictory address to his disciples, immediately before his trial and condemnation to death. In that discourse, he intimates to his disconsolate friends, that it was expedient, nay, better for them, that he should return to heaven, and send a *third* person, of equal power and glory, to plead his innocence and his cause, than that he, in his own person, should continue with them, and plead his own cause. "When," said he, "my special advocate, the *Paraclete*, shall come, he will convict the world of its sin in repudiating me, convince the world of my righteousness, because I will be honorably received into heaven. I will return to the bosom of my Father, and your Father; to my God, and to your God. And he will convince all men, of a future and final judgment after death, and of an eternal reward."

To this effect, he spoke to his friends and confidants, before entering upon the last scenes of his superlatively eventful life. And here we are led more appropriately to the second item of importance, necessary to our just conception of the grand fact, asserted in our text, namely, the appositeness of the declaration, that "he was justified by the Spirit."

When we reflect that his sun had set behind a dark and portentous cloud; condemned to the cross of a Roman slave, and that, too, by God's own vicegerent, the high priest of his own nation; and by the civil powers, that God had ordained over his own country and people,

it would seem expedient, if not for contemporaries, at least for posterity, in all coming time, that her character should be more than re-instated—indeed, glorified above all rivalry and competition with any aspirant that ever had sought or obtained a mitre or a crown.

This view of the premises suggests to us the propriety of formally inquiring, in the second place, into the appositeness of the term *justify*, as here applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. Such an inquiry naturally leads us to the closing scenes of his life; especially during his last trial and condemnation. It was, indeed, literally true, according to ancient predictions, that “he was numbered with transgressors,” that “he died with the wicked;” and that, too, as though he had been convicted of blasphemy against God, and treason against the government of Rome.

It is well for us, that his last trial and condemnation occupy so large a space in the four Gospels, and are given to us with so much circumstantiality and detail. The trial of Jesus does not, I fear, occupy a corresponding space in the minds and hearts of our contemporaries. The great palpable facts are, however, all that we can at present note.

The sum of the allegations against him is, that he claimed two thrones—the throne of God, and the throne of Cæsar—the government of earth and heaven. He claimed to be the son of David, according to the flesh, to whom, prospectively, the empire of the world belonged; and the Son of God, according to a Divine nature, to whom, not only the authority of earth, but also that of heaven belonged. This was, indeed, often hinted, alluded to, and, indeed, assumed by himself and his friends, some of whom looked with a single eye, not merely to the

loaves and fishes, but to provincial crowns and sceptres under his administration. These assumptions had some way reached the ears of both Herod and Pontius Pilate, and other contemporaries of note at that day. But the narrative of his trial and condemnation will place the subject more fully before our minds.

It is as follows :—

In consequence of his doctrine and miracles; and, especially, because of his developments of the hypocrisy, arrogance, and perversity of the Pharisees, the Scribes, and the Rulers of the nation, they machinated his murder, and the annihilation of his party. At their great paschal anniversary, during the last year of his public ministry, while they were concerting measures for his apprehension, the Devil tempted Judas to embrace the opportunity of betraying him into the hands of his enemies. From his native cupidity, he readily yielded to the temptation; and soon finding an opportunity, he delivered him up into their hands. The Chief Priests, the Scribes, and the Elders, immediately became his accusers in the court of Caiaphas, assisted by his father-in-law, Annas, to whom they first tendered him. False witnesses were sought with great avidity and diligence. And such, it appears, was the popular opinion of the Saviour, and awe for his person, that they had almost failed in finding the least number which the law required in such cases. "*At the last,*" says Matthew, "they found two false witnesses." Yet, all that they could allege against him was, that, on some occasion, he had said, "Destroy this temple of God, and I will rebuild it in three days." This he had not said in the sense which they desired to give it. But it answered the purpose of the High Priest's court, in any way to prove that, being a mere man, he had blasphemously assumed Omnipotence, or co-equality with

God. But the witnesses disagreed so much in their other misrepresentations, that it was in form, as well as in substance, illegal evidence. Most unwarrantably, in all our conceptions of law and evidence, imperilling character or life, he was compelled, under a solemn oath or adjuration, to swear against his own life. But, he gave them a response, under that solemnity, in the affirmative, that he was the Christ, the Son of the Blessed ; which, in their sense, was blasphemy, being, as they alleged, "making himself equal with God." But, instead of mitigating his offence, he adds, that they should yet see him on the right hand of the Almighty, coming in the clouds of heaven, to judge the world. This, in their construction, was blasphemy against God. In their judgment, as the supreme court of the Jewish nation, they pronounced him "guilty of death." Immediately on pronouncement of this sentence, the mob, aided and abetted by his accusers, and the court of the High Priest, proceed to show him every form of indignity, to degrade, and to insult him, in every conceivable way. They spit in his face, buffeted him, blind-folded him, smote him with the palms of their hands ; and, in derision, said, "Prophecy to us who it was that smote thee."

But, although condemned by this court, "*to be worthy of death*," being tributary to the Roman government, and under its civil polity, they had not power to enforce their decision ; and, therefore, resolved to have him arraigned before Cæsar's Court, then under the administration of Pontius Pilate, as Governor. But, blasphemy, or assumed divinity, was not a mortal sin under the Roman law, which recognized the worship of many gods, essentially polytheistical in its spirit and character. A new crime must be alleged against him. He is, therefore, accused of *treason* against that

government, because he talked of establishing a new kingdom; and, therefore, by implication, assumed to be a king. As a traitor, a treasonable person, aiming at the supremacy of the state—in fact, a rival of Cæsar—he is indicted, and delivered up to Pontius Pilate.

No sooner had Pilate's wife heard of the commotion among the people, and of her husband being called upon to judge his case, than she sent to him her ominous dream, with her warning, not to decide against him.

Pilate, himself, well knew, that, on the part of the Jews, it was wholly a work of envy. Nevertheless, time-serving and unprincipled pagan that he was, despite of her dream and caution; despite of the upbraidings of his own conscience, having no governing principle but his own political aggrandizement; in mockery of all justice, washing his hands before the people, instead of purifying his conscience; he commanded him to be scourged, and delivered to the priesthood and the infuriate mob panting for his blood.

While they were making preparation for his crucifixion, a portion of the rabble, unto whose custody he was committed, even in the governor's court, arrayed him in an old scarlet robe, crowned him with a wreath of thorns, and put a mock sceptre into his hands—bowing the knee, in derision, and hailed him as the King of the Jews. Amid all this contumely and insult, "as a lamb before its shearers is dumb, he opened not his mouth." During this reign of darkness, in his humiliation, his condemnation having been extorted from his own lips, while witnessing a good confession before many spectators, may we not exclaim with the prophet, Who can describe the character of his contemporaries, by

whose councils and hands he was betrayed, condemned, insulted, and crucified? Yet, in all this, as testifies one of his Apostles, "When he suffered, he threatened not, but committed his cause," and made his appeal "to Him who judges righteously." He is crucified between two of the vilest malefactors, in the presence of a world's convention, composed, not of Gentiles only, but of Jews, assembled from every nation under the skies.

No son of man ever possessed a sensitiveness so delicate as he; and, therefore, no one can conceive of the intense agonies which he endured. Forsaken by his Father, deserted by his friends, mocked and insulted by his enemies, nailed to a Roman cross, suspended between heaven and earth, he expired. The earth trembled, the rocks were rent, the sun withheld his light, the heavens were in mourning. All nature stood aghast. He dies, not only the prince of martyrs, but he dies a *sin offering*, as "THE LAMB OF GOD," bearing "*away the sin of the world.*"

The agonies he endured, were not mere physical pain, though even that was beyond all our conceptions. His Father hid his face from him, and his soul felt the bitterness of his indignation and desertion. Even the anticipation of it was a burthen that covered him with a sweat of blood; while, in Gethsemane, he groaned, in horror, at the approaching scene, and, praying, said, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; but, not as I will, but as thou wilt." No sinful man, familiarized with guilt, can ever fathom the depth of that agony, indicated in the utterance of these words, "My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me!"

After his resurrection from the dead, at different intervals, he frequently held interviews with his disciples,

and gave them many infallible proofs of his resurrection and personal identity; and, on his own assignation, they were present to witness his ascension into heaven.

To Luke we are chiefly indebted for the narration of this glorious scene, and to David for our knowledge of his triumphant entrance into heaven. The former, in his "Acts of the Apostles," records the manner of his ascension; and the latter, in his prophetic Psalms, makes the scenes of his entrance into heaven, and reception there, pass before us in all the splendors of the richest imagery. To these we can only make a brief allusion.

Having delivered his last instructions to his disciples, the apostles, and led them out of Jerusalem, as far as to Bethany; and thence, again, ascending the Mount of Olives, while in the act of pronouncing upon them a final benediction, in a chariot of angels, he slowly and sublimely ascends to heaven. He does not suddenly vanish from their sight, as a gleam of light, or a vivid corruscation of lightning; but slowly and sublimely mounts, in a chariot of angels; a faint vision of which, Israel had, when, from his pillow, at Bethel, on a ladder, in a climax of glory, the angels of God were returning to their heavenly thrones, from a special visit to him, concerning the "Desire of all nations"—the bright and "morning star" of Jacob.

Enrapt in beatific vision, gazing on the wake of glory reflected from his celestial train, while he approaches the heaven of heavens, absorbed even to an oblivion of themselves, of earth, and all its glory, they stood, breathless, gazing, waiting his return. But, in condescending sympathy, he sends back a portion of his retinue, to inform them, that they need no longer wait for his descent again.

David, speaking by the Spirit, in solemn vision of this long anticipated scene, after informing us that God's chariots are myriads of angels, opens to our contemplation his reception at the gates of the Celestial City. From him we learn, that his preceding heralds, soon as they approach the heavenly gates, address the sentinels of the Eternal City in such words as these: "Lift up your heads, you towering gates; you heavenly doors, give way, that the King of Glory may enter in." The sentinels demand, "Who is this King of Glory? Who!" His heralds respond, "THE LORD MESSIAH, the Almighty Hero, who vanquished Death, and broke the sceptre of the Grave." The sentinels, in triumph, shout, "Lift up your heads, you towering gates! you heavenly portals, wide expand! that the King of Glory may enter in!" Thus he enters the presence chamber of the Everlasting King. Soon as he approaches the Divine Majesty, rising from his supernal throne, and addressing him, he says, "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Reign thou in the midst of thine enemies." "I will extend the rod of thy great empire over all the earth, and make thy foes thy footstool." Thus was he crowned "Lord of All.

The angels, from all the worlds above, from all the realms of Jehovah, with all the principalities, authorities, and powers, of heavenly spheres, are summoned to the scene; and having presented to them "The FIRST BORN from the dead," the "BEGINNING OF THE NEW CREATION," the Eternal Father, who, in the days of Messiah's humiliation, once spoke from the excellent glory, saying "This is my beloved Son, in whom I delight, obey him;" now, addressing the heads of all the celestial departments of spiritual hierarchies,

commands their allegiance to him, saying, "Let all the angels of God worship him." To him, let every knee bow; to him, let every tongue swear allegiance.

The choral triumph rises. One universal hallelujah echoes through all the realms of glory. "The four and twenty Elders fall down before him that sat upon the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord! to receive glory, and honor, and authority; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created!" Thus was the Messiah crowned Lord of All.

And here we shall return to Jerusalem, where he had been degraded, and crucified, as a felon. There we find the twelve Apostles in full assembly met; the chair vacated by the apostacy of Judas, the traitor having been filled by an appeal to heaven. They were, according to a command of the risen Lord, waiting for a new message from him, as the Supreme Sovereign of earth and heaven. And waiting, too, under the public reprobation, consequent upon the condemnation and crucifixion of their leader. Under such a load of infamy, how could they presume to say one word in his favor! They were, therefore, both kindly and wisely commanded by their Leader, "To tarry in Jerusalem, till they should receive power from on high."

It has passed into a proverb, that, wherever character or reputation is lost, there only can they be found or regained. As, therefore, he had been dishonored in Jerusalem, and before a national convention; in Jerusalem alone, and before a similar national convention, could he be successfully and triumphantly justified from all the charges alleged against him. Hence, the

annunciation of what had transpired in heaven, during the week intervening between his ascension and the day of Pentecost, was wisely deferred till the next national convention.

Meantime, as already observed, a grand revolution, or rather, perhaps, we should say, a new order of things, had been consummated in heaven. All authority—legislative, judicial, and executive—is irrevocably lodged in his hands. The Father now judges no man, and will not judge the world at the final judgment. He is ordained by God, his Father, to judge the living and the dead, at his second coming. Moreover, the Holy Spirit, himself, is given to him, not as it was, *upon* him, and *in* him, during his personal ministry, qualifying him, as the Son of Man, for the grand mission on which he came; but it is now given him to dispense, in whatever gifts, or measures, he pleases.

The convention annually succeeding the Passover week, was that called the Pentecost, or the commemoration of the giving of the law to Israel, from Mount Sinai, on the fiftieth day after the institution of the Passover sacrifice. Then God descended to meet Moses on Mount Sinai, in Arabia; and, through ranks of angels, put into his hands the moral constitution, or law, of ten commands. Most apposite, then, according to the symbolic institution, it was, that the day which commemorated that event, should be the day on which the Holy Spirit would descend from heaven, to Mount Zion, in Jerusalem, at the opening of the new dispensation of remedial love. And, as that descent was in the presence of a grand convention of the seed of Abraham, so this, also, should be in the presence of a similar convention of the same people, present from every nation under heaven.

When, therefore, the whole Christian Church was convened in one place; and the nation, also, by its numerous representatives from all kingdoms, and tribes, was assembled at their metropolis, the gospel trumpet was heard; a sound from heaven, equally significant of the Divine presence, affrighted, and summoned all Jerusalem to the spot, where the new community of the true Israel of God was solemnly waiting the advent of the promised Advocate—the *Paraclete*—to empower them to proceed in the work given them in solemn charge.

His arrival, or descent from heaven, was not only heard rending the heavens, but he was also seen in tongues, resembling fire, separate from each other, glowing in heaven's own brightness, on the heads of the Holy Twelve. On seeing the concourse, simultaneously they arose, as one man, and opening their mouths in all the dialects of earth, there assembled, they solemnly and sublimely announced that the Messiah was justified before God, from all the allegations of blasphemy and treason preferred against him; that he was, in fact, crowned "Lord of all," and constituted the reigning sovereign of the universe. Angels, authorities, and powers, being subjected to him. Suffice it to add, that just as many Jews were saved that day, as were killed at the giving of the law on the first Jewish pentecost. Thus commenced the new kingdom, or reign of heaven.

An analysis of the incidents and events of that day, most memorable in the annals of Christianity, is fraught with many blessings to those who sincerely, and, with a single eye, investigate its sublime details. Peter's speech, on that occasion, is the grand opening speech of the new dispensation of Divine grace. To him, in honor of his early confession of the true faith in the person, mission,

and office of the Lord Jesus at Cesarea Philippi, in attestation of its truthfulness and importance, were the keys of the kingdom of heaven granted. He, therefore, primarily and emphatically opened the kingdom of heaven to the Jews, and afterwards to the Gentiles, convened at Cesarea in the house of the Roman centurian Cornelius. The Holy Spirit, on both occasions, confirming his words with unequivocal attestations.

If there was a revolution, or change of government in heaven, a shaking of heaven, a change of administration, pursuant upon the ascension, trial, justification, and coronation of the Lord Jesus Christ, there was also a new era—a new dispensation of Divine government, evangelical and not legal, pursuant upon the descension of the Holy Spirit, to remain always in the Church, as its quickening, animating, sanctifying, and soul-inspiring life. In the former case, its termination was an incarnation of Divinity in humanity in the person of the Lord Jesus, (for such was the consummation of the legal and typical age,) but, in the latter case, it is not an incarnation, but an inhabitation of God through the Holy Spirit, now the *holy guest** in the members of that spiritual community, called *the body* of Christ, or the house of God, the pillar and support of the truth in the world. We are thus led farther into the arcana of the house that Jesus built, in contrast with the house, or rather *tent*, that Moses built.

But, to develop this, would lead us far beyond our present limits and design, and, therefore, we undertake no such task at present. We can only add, as consonant

* It is worthy of remark, that *αγιον πνευμα*, was, by Tyndal, translated, always *Holy Spirit*, never *Holy Ghost*, in the Old Testament; but, occasionally, *Holy Ghost*, in the New Testament. He understood this matter. He was approved, and followed by King James' translators.

with our theme, and the occasion, that the justification of the Lord Jesus, both in heaven and earth, from the specifications against him on the part of his enemies, does not, in the least, militate against the fact, that he did profess to be both equal with God his Father in his supreme deity, and take the real and rightful king of earth and heaven; for this he virtually affirmed, while witnessing a good confession, before both Annas and Caiaphas, and Pontius Pilate. During his trial, he admitted that he was, emphatically, "*the Son of God*;" that God was as really and literally his Father, as Mary was his mother; and, that he was born of her to be a king, and was a king, born of an heiress to the throne of David, and was her first born, and, consequently, had a right to both the throne of David, and the throne of God, both of which was symbolized in the throne of God's anointed, or Christed David.

In aiming at, and in claiming these honors, and this sovereignty over earth and heaven, in affirming that all authority—legislative, executive, and judicial, was rightfully his, and was given to him by his Father, and his God, he was not, in so doing, guilty of either blasphemy against God, or treason against Cæsar. He admitted the indictment to be literally true and just in the facts on which it was based, but denied that, in his case, it was either blasphemy or treason so to assume.

There is no stronger evidence, or proof, of the true, proper, and real Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, than that derived from his trial and conviction. He confessed against his own life, that he was, in the peculiar sense of the indictment, the "**SON OF THE BLESSED**," the **ONLY BEGOTTEN** of the Father. They only proved it constructively, and, by implication; but he affirmed it boldly, and explicitly. He denied not that he had said, that

he could "rebuild the temple of his own body in three days—a greater miracle, far, than the rebuilding of Solomon's temple. To give life to the dead, is the superlative of all power. To be re-animated by a power inherent in one's own self, is the unequivocal assumption of real Divinity. And so the High Priests, the Rabbis, the Scribes, and the people, understood it!

What a silly excuse has any man for his lifeless, soulless, unitarianism, who understands the trial, the confession, and the condemnation of the Messiah. Had he assumed Divinity in the unitarian sense, the Jews would have had no argument against him, with the people of that day, who admitted the inspiration and Divine mission of so many eminent persons, some of whose Divine attestations were as unquestionable as those of Jesus the Messiah. The last confession of Jesus, and his condemnation thereupon, by the priesthood of his own nation, is, to an enlightened and well balanced mind, free from prejudice, an all-sufficient argument in attestation of his true and proper Divinity, else he died a martyr to a lie!

It is also as irrefragable an evidence and proof, that his death was a true, proper, and real sacrifice for sin, or an atonement for sin, as it is of his personal and proper Divinity. For whose sins did he die? Death is the wages of sin. God has decreed, that he who sins shall die. But he has not decreed, that the innocent and unoffending shall die. If, then, an innocent, pure, and holy man should die, death would cease to be the wages of sin; unless we suppose that his death was voluntarily tendered, and accepted in the room, or for the sake of another. The conclusion seems to be inevitable, that Jesus was a rank impostor, or that he was really, truly, and properly a Divine person; and that his death

was a true and real sacrifice for sin. These conclusions may, indeed, be approached, and have often been, most satisfactorily, approached and confirmed, in many a well beaten and well established path of reasoning and evidence; but, as it appears to me, in none more clear, direct, and satisfactory, than this.

But this, although an important aim, and a chief point in this discourse, is not the cardinal object. These great facts and developments, though historical, are also doctrinal. They are, indeed, premises of transcendent significance. They teach the true, real, and proper divinity and humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. They also teach his full and satisfactory sacrifice for sin, by which he magnified the Divine law and government, and justified God's character in forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.

His resurrection from the dead, his ascension into heaven, his coronation, as Lord of the universe, having all power and authority over angels, men, and demons, given to him; are, indeed, ample evidence of the Divine approbation of what he had done and suffered for us. They are, when contemplated in their evangelical import and bearings, supremely interesting, and soul-absorbing themes—the very basis of what is properly called, “*the kingdom of heaven*,” or the reign of God in men.

This reign of grace within men, under the style of “*THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN*,” was the anti-type of many a figure; the burthen of many a prophecy; the theme of many a discourse, on the part of John the Harbinger; of the Messiah himself; and of the Holy Twelve, after they had been plenarily inspired by the descent of the Holy Spirit. It is regarded as the grand ultimatum of sovereign and almighty love, and is emphatically styled, the “*Philanthropy of God our Saviour*,” shining forth

from the full-orbed face of the Sun of Righteousness and mercy—the contemplated design and consummation of the greatest of all events; the investiture of the Lord Jesus with absolute sovereignty, as the one only reigning monarch of God's whole creation—"angels, authorities, principalities, and powers," of all ranks and orders, "having then been subjected to him."

Amongst men it would be called, a "Revolution in the universe;" a term, however, wholly inapposite. It is, indeed, a grand epoch, a new era in eternity, "the consummation of ages." When announcing it in Jerusalem, on Pentecost, after he had received an unction from above, Peter made the proclamation consequent upon the coronation of his Master—"Let all the house of Israel most assuredly know, that God has constituted that same Jesus, whom you crucified, **BOTH GOD AND CHRIST,**" the anointed sovereign of all.

This *christening*, or anointing, of Jesus, as autocrat of the universe, was, indeed, the most grand, august, and sublime event, that ever transpired. And the proclamation of it, the most thrilling and soul-subduing annunciation ever uttered on earth. This honor Peter had, and Jerusalem witnessed. It was, indeed, the proper place. It was the capital of the only kingdom on earth, especially related to God. It was the city of the Great King, and the theatre of the temple of God. It was that Zion from which, as Isaiah and Micah foretold, the new law—the last message of Jehovah—should go forth. "For, out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Hence it was, that the Lord, in giving his last directions to the Apostles, commanded them to begin at Jerusalem.

Christianity was never clearly understood by any man, who did not begin at Jerusalem, and fully learn the

meaning of the events that transpired there, at the time of the first annunciation of the coronation of the Lord Messiah. It was, indeed, "the holy city;" the consecrated theatre of all the grand scenes of human redemption. In its environs, Jesus was born of Mary, the Virgin, providentially summoned there, from Nazareth, under a decree of Cæsar Augustus. There, too, he was dishonored. There he was crucified—died, was buried, and rose again. In its precincts, after he returned from Galilee, and from the Mount of Olives, he ascended to heaven. There, too, the Holy Spirit personally descended from heaven, to animate, sanctify, and dwell in the Church, during his absence; till he return to it again, or to his Church, mystically so denominated.

In Jerusalem, the first gospel sermon was preached. There the first Christian Church was founded. There were the first three thousand penitents forgiven; and thence has been diffused, over the broad earth, "the Word of Life."

Christianity is not a new edition of Patriarchal, or of Jewish institutions. It is not a reiterated allegory. It is a clear development of mysteries, "hid from ages and generations," that passed away before its promulgation. Many renowned patriarchs and prophets desired to understand the institutions which they ministered, and the oracles which they uttered. But they did not. Their institutions, their rites and ceremonies, their holy times, and their holy things, were but worldly and temporary adumbrations of good things then future; "God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

Abel's, Noah's, and Abraham's lambs; the paschal lamb; the millions of lambs "on Jewish altars slain;

the tabernacle and its worship; the temple and its more splendid ceremonials; were, one and all, but shadows of the true "*Lamb of God*," and his mission. He is *the Lamb*, provided by God himself, slain, only in type, "from the foundation of the world," down to the crucifixion of the true "*Lamb of God*, that took away the sin of the world."

It was his harbinger, John the Baptist, that first pointed him out as "*the Lamb of God*, that taketh away the sin of the world." Abrahamic and Jewish covenants were only covenants of promise. Their circumcision, bloody offerings, washings, and legal ablutions, were all but "shadows of good things to come;" the substance of which, was Christ and his evangelical institutions. The Jews were circumcised; "baptized into Moses, in the cloud and in the sea;" ate the mystic manna; drank the mystic rock; yet fell in the wilderness, and fell short of Canaan.

Their sacrifices, purifications, pardons, were only types—symbols of a real sacrifice, a real purification, a real pardon, through faith in the blood of the true Lamb of God; whether by them, prospectively, or by us, retrospectively, contemplated. The heavens came down, in the person of Jesus, and in that of the Holy Spirit, on the first Pentecost after the sacrifice of Christ, and his coronation in heaven.

"For a little while," as Macknight translates it, "he was made lower than the angels, that, by the grace of God, he might taste of death for all; but now, being "crowned with glory and honor," "he is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to grant" (the benefit of) "repentance to Israel—even the remission of sins."

Upon a review of our subject, indeed, of all the promises of the Bible, we may say, that, "as the path

of the just shineth more and more unto the perfect day," so the path of life was shining more and more from the sacrifice of Abel, to the descent of the Holy Spirit, to be the holy guest of the Christian temple, on the first Pentecost after the Lord's ascension.

We, therefore, contemplate the Patriarchal dispensation as the *star-light*; the Jewish dispensation, as the *moon-light*; the mission of John, as the *twilight*; the Christian dispensation, beginning with the exaltation of the Lord Jesus, and the descent of the Holy Spirit, as the *sun-light* age of the world. The Sun of Righteousness has, according to Malachi, the last of the ancient prophetic line, risen upon the world, "with healing in his wings." Let us "go forth, then, and grow up like calves of the stall." The holy patriarchs had but the *bud*; the Jews had but the *blossom*; we have the mature *fruit* of Divine grace.

But, alas! how few, very few of us, realize and enjoy the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of Christ; contained in the rich promises, and the holy ordinances of Christ's reign! Yet we are not straitened in him, but, in our own low, imperfect, and inadequate conceptions of him; in all his personal, and official fulness and glory. Many of us are still serving in the oldness of the letter, rather than in the newness of the Spirit. We have carnalized and secularized, rather than spiritualized, the gospel and its institutions. We seem to prefer the husks that envelop the gospel fruit, rather than to eat and enjoy the ripe corn in the ear—the weak and beggarly elements of a hoary tradition, even in its dotage, rather than the bread and the water of life of the new kingdom of grace.

We have created our metaphysical and theological idols, and after them will we go. One will have his

faith alone—that is, his opinions; another acts as though he believed in water alone; another, in his works of merit alone. One changes water into wine; another, wine into water. One fights for the word alone; another, for the Spirit alone. One converts his god into a wafer, and eats him; another fattens upon new dreams and visions of some spirit, which he mistakes for the Spirit of God. But the small remnant, the true elect of God, believe all that God says; hopes for all that God promises; obey, in aim and in heart, all that God commands; and endeavor to keep themselves pure, from all the idols of the world. As many as thus walk, we will say, and pray with the Apostle—"Peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon all the Israel of God."

SERMON XXI.

THE THEORY OF RELIGION.

BY REV. GEORGE CROLEY, D.D.,

Of London, England

"Then said he unto them, Therefore, every Scribe, which is instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a man that is an Householder, which bringeth out of his treasure things new and old."—Matthew xiii. 52.

RELIGION is a science, for it is eminently addressed to the understanding. It has the principles, the laws, and the progressive discoveries of a science. But, of all sciences, it is the noblest; for it possesses the loftiest principles, the most unerring laws, and the most boundless discoveries. It alone tells us of the true nature of man, and of the solemn responsibilities of his being. It alone gives us the still higher knowledge of the Divine Will, of the providential government of this world, and of the glories of the world beyond the grave.

It is in this view of its magnitude and object, of its measureless value, and its magnificent purposes, that the text commands the preparation of its teachers. In the preceding portion of the chapter, our Lord had

poured forth a succession of parables, all in powerful and *practical* illustration of the nature, the means, and the progress of the Gospel. It was to be the wheat, cast over the face of the world, some wasted, some withered, some choked up, and some fertile; it was to be the grain of mustard-seed, springing up into a fair and sheltering tree; it was to be the leaven, secretly working its way, until it pervaded the whole mass; it was to be the hidden treasure, which made the field worth the whole wealth of the finder; it was to be the pearl of great price, an equivalent for all other merchandize; it was to be the great net, gathering the good and bad to the hand of the fisher of men.

It is in this variety of form, and force of view, that the Lord of the Gospel gives his religion to the zeal, the sincerity, and the learning of its ministers.

“Jesus then asked the disciples, Have ye understood these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then said he unto them, Every Scribe which is instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a man which is an Householder, which bringeth out of his treasures things new and old.”

All true religion is by revelation of God. Some theologians give the priority to natural religion; but they are in error. It was neither the first in point of time, nor the first in point of impression.

The three great principles of religion—the being of a God, the atonement, and the immortality of the soul—were never the *discoveries* of man.

From the period of the fall, to the deluge, the condition of man was evidently one of intense toil; a perpetual struggle with the difficulties of a world laid under the Divine anathema. After the deluge, man was still the creature of toil. That the being of a

God is capable of proof from the order and organization of his works, is true; and it was among the charges of St. Paul, against the heathen philosophers, that they had not exercised their reason in the proof. But, how can we conceive this most sublime of all abstractions to have been reached by the unassisted faculties of generations, scattered through the swamps and forests of a new world, exposed to the vicissitudes of inclement nature, and struggling with man, the wilderness, and the lion, for existence?

The atonement was a conception of still higher difficulty; for, what connection then, or even now, is to be discovered, *on human principles*, between the death of an inferior animal, and the sins of man?

The immortality of the soul, was, if possible, still more beyond the reach of human faculties than either; for, human reason was not merely without a guide to the conception, but all nature seemed to be opposed to its discovery. Man is surrounded by decay. Dissolution is the universal law. Who had ever seen man return from the grave? Who had ever known the spirit of the departed? The revivals of nature, the recurrence of the seasons, the vegetation of the forest, the blossoming of the flower, or even the transformation of the insect, were but slight analogies; the tree, the flower, or the insect had not perished; their existence was still before the eye. But the beauty and strength of man had visibly sunk into the dust: the form passed away, and the spirit was known no more.

Yet those three great truths, thus beyond the grasp of the human faculties, were in the possession of every race of mankind, since the earliest periods of human record.

The most uncivilized nations of the earth, from the most obscure times of their history, believed in a God.

They worshipped Him, in the rude acknowledgment of his power, and in the equally rude acknowledgment of his beneficence.

The most uncivilized nations believed in the atonement, by sacrifice. The offering of animal life for human expiation, belonged to every people and every age.

The most uncivilized nations believed in the immortality of the soul. And it is remarkable, that this belief, though opposed by the strongest human prepossessions, occupied the largest space in the mind of every people of the ancient world. From the mystical Indian, and the brilliant Greek, to the roving life of Asia, and the savage indolence of the African, the doctrine was embraced in every shape in which it could excite the feelings, or engross the thoughts of man.

Every nation of antiquity had a future world of its own, pictured with the imagery of loveliness or terror, familiar to its habits of existence. The Greek filled the regions of the soul with the marble hills and sparkling waters of his own delightful land. The Scythian gave it the boundless grandeur of his deserts, and piled the tomb of his chieftain with the weapons and ornaments which he had used in life, for imaginary huntings and feasts beyond the grave.

The man of Scandinavia imagined palaces of supernatural pomp, where the spirits of his kings and warriors revelled in perpetual banquets, listening to their exploits chanted by shadowy bards.

The Egyptian embalmed his dead ; and thus attempted to fix before his eye, in the imperishable body, an emblem of the imperishable soul.

Is it possible to believe, that conceptions thus difficult, yet universal ; thus opposed to nature, yet congenial to habit ; thus superior to the invention of man, yet thus

powerfully impressed on every stage of human society, were the work of man? They were the work of a will, altogether above man. Essential to the advancement of society, to the happiness of human being, and to our fitness for that still noble state, for which the world is simply a preparative; yet too high for the struggling condition and infirm faculties of man, they were the gift of Heaven. All true religion is by revelation of God.

I have now stated the origin of the three great principles of religion. I shall next give an outline of their history. The theory which I propose, is one which elucidates the chief difficulties of the plan of Providence.

This theory is,—that the three dispensations, the Patriarchal, the Jewish, and the Christian, have had, for one of their pre-eminent objects, the successive illustration of the three principles.

The Patriarchal dispensation—from Adam to Moses—was expressly directed to establish the belief in a God. During this whole period, the existence, the attributes, and the operation of a supreme Being, are continually impressed on the heart and the understanding. The direct presence of God, in connection with the government of the world, is expressly mentioned in every leading event of the primal history. It is God, who is declared to be the Creator of the universe; who commands the successive changes, which render our globe fit for the habitation of man; who gives Adam the law of innocency in paradise; who lays on him the penalties of the fall; and who ultimately brings the deluge on the world.

It is God, who restores the world, and who makes the perpetual covenant for the future recurrence of

the seasons, the reviving fertility of the soil, and the security of the globe against another deluge.

It is God, who calls Abraham from his Gentile nation, gives him the promise of a countless offspring, and consummates all by the promise of the Messiah.

Throughout this period the Divine action is in no instance, through the remote impulses of a providence, veiled in clouds; it is by the Divine presence. The Almighty alone creates, commands, guides, and sustains; he speaks and reasons, he rewards and punishes, in person. His action is *exclusive*, his power alone is impressed on every event. God is all in all.

At the same time, the other two great principles are also represented, but in a subordinate degree; and each only in a single instance.

The atonement is shown forth, in the sacrifice of Abel; and but in that one recorded instance, before the deluge.

The immortality of the soul is shown forth, in the living ascent of Enoch, and but in that one recorded instance, in the history of the primitive world.

Judaism, the second dispensation, began with the call of Moses; and the second principle, the atonement, was especially committed to its charge.

With this object, the whole ritual of Judaism was sacrificial. Even the distinguishing act of the national ancestor, the crowning operation of the faith of Abraham, was his submission to the Divine command, enjoining the sacrifice of his son. Isaac was the type of that transcendent victim, who, two thousand years after, was to be offered on the same mountain. The substitution of the "ram caught in the thicket," was simply an announcement of that intermediate worship, by which animal sacrifice was to be substituted for the great Atoner

himself, until the appointed time of his coming into the world.

In this dispensation, the other two principles had also their representatives, though but in a subordinate degree. The idea of a Supreme Being must always be of the most sacred importance. Yet, in this period, there is but one especial display of the Divine supremacy—the delivering of the law upon Sinai.

The immortality of the soul had also its representative, and of the same order which signalized the principle in the antediluvian world. The living ascent of Elijah, which, like the ascent of Enoch, was the single instance in its dispensation.

It is, then, evident, that, in those two periods, the acknowledgment of the principle of immortality was provided for, in the most remarkable degree consistent with the example of an individual. In both, the most memorable men of their times were chosen; Enoch, the living head of the patriarchal family; and Elijah, the great leader of the surviving Church of Israel. Their characters and offices were also strikingly similar—Enoch, the preacher of righteousness, and prophet of the final judgment of God; Elijah, the denouncer of idolatry, and punisher of the idolatrous priesthood and corrupted people of Israel. With the eyes of their age and country thus turned upon them, they both passed away into the future world, triumphing over the power of death, and untouched by the grave.

Christianity, the third dispensation, was especially appointed for the illustration of the third principle, immortality. The Epistles are the chief exposition of Christianity: and in them, the promises, the objects, and the splendors, of immortality, are continually, and almost exclusively, urged on the mind.

"I press," says the great Apostle, "towards the mark, for the prize of our high calling, which is in Christ Jesus, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself."

It is in this sense, that the Epistles appeal, with such peculiar force, to the resurrection of our Lord. "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also in vain."

St. Paul, after throwing aside the frivolous and captious objections of his time, to the general doctrine, hastens to the triumphant conclusion:—

"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept."

"For, this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality; then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

The Apostle then assigns this astonishing and most illustrious elevation of human nature, to that only source which renders it at once glorious and secure.

"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, *through our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

This view also accounts for the otherwise inexplicable difficulty, of the constant prediction of Christian suffering.

Our Lord continually prepares the Church for trial. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came, not to send peace, but a sword." He constantly commands the disciples to remember, that the servant is not above his master, and to see their own persecutions

in the insults and injuries heaped upon himself. He foretells the disruption of the private ties of life, the falling away of friends, the remorselessness of enemies, the severity of kings, and the madness of the people.

“Ye shall be hated of all nations for my sake.”

Why was this to be the universal fate of the most undisturbing, and the most benevolent of all religions? but to make the Christian cling to the hope of immortality. Why was darkness thus suffered to cover the earth to him? but to turn his eyes to the guidance of heaven. Why was his progress thus to lie through the most thorny paths of life? but to prevent his forgetting his holier hope, by the way. Why must the world be to him, above all other men, a “vale of tears?” but to elevate his heart to the contemplation of that nobler existence, where “all tears shall be wiped from all eyes.” “If we have hope in this life only,” says the Apostle—and no more courageous, patient, or persevering heart ever lived—“we are, of all men, the most miserable.”

It is remarkable, that this struggle is, *exclusively*, the characteristic of the third dispensation. Suffering is the image and superscription, stamped on Christianity *alone*. There was no predicted martyrdom, of either mind or frame, in the patriarchal dispensation. There was none in the Jewish. In the former, man was created to be the lord of the world, and the inheritor of all its prosperity, if he had not fallen. In the latter, the throne of David was to be the most illustrious and enduring of earthly sovereignties. The fall of the nation into idolatry alone defeated the inheritance.

But, to Christianity, trial was the covenant of its birth. Like the life of its Lord, its life was to be a perpetual pilgrimage; the cross was to be always on its shoulder; the crown of thorns was to be its only diadem.

Why was this traverse through a hostile world, fixed as the original sentence of the religion of faith, hope, and charity; of unresisting faith, of humble hope, and of unwearied charity? Why, but to wean man from the trivialities of the world; to release him from the besetting arrogance of his nature; to subdue that perpetual temptation of his infirm heart, by which the fictions and follies of the hour obstruct, and finally eclipse, the magnificence of eternity!

It is true, that, in our free and fortunate country, persecution has no longer the power of disturbing Christian tranquillity; but, it is to be remembered, through what sacrifices our forefathers obtained that tranquillity; and even at this moment, to how small a portion of the earth religious freedom is limited. We must only guard this great gift with the more sacred vigilance; and, while we rejoice in its possession, beware of the weak neglect, or the criminal worldliness, by which truth has been lost to nations once as favored as our own.

Immortality is constantly before the mind of the Apostle Paul: he scarcely, in any one instance, alludes to his own toils, without referring to the glorious consolations of the world to come.

Even when he speaks of a subject so common as the mortality of man, he instantly reminds us, that "we have a house, eternal in the heavens."

It is in this sense, too, that we learn the real significance of the expression, "He brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."* In the

* It is probable, that this expression is too strong for the original. *Φωτισεν*, may mean merely, "to throw light on, to illustrate," the truth already known.

literal meaning, this language would be contrary to the fact. The doctrine of immortality was as old as the patriarchal age; for it is written, that "all the fathers died in faith." The doctrine of the resurrection had been long known to the men of Judea; it was the distinguishing tenet of the Pharisee, and was even the general belief of the people. The sister of Lazarus unhesitatingly answers our Lord, that she knows, that her brother "will rise again at the last day." But it was Christianity which first applied all its reason to the proof of the principle; which directed all its energy to its extension; and which made its decisive acknowledgment the especial triumph of its revelation.

This final dispensation began with the descent of the Holy Spirit at the Pentecost. In this period, each of the former principles has one remarkable demonstration, and but *one*. Stephen, the first martyr, dying in illustration of the divinity of our Lord, saw the "glory of God" in the heavens. The atonement was commemorated, once and for ever, by the establishment of the Eucharist.

If, we are asked, why, in the eighteen centuries which have followed, there has been *no* visible representation of immortality—no ascent of a Christian Enoch, or Elijah, the answer is,—the whole dispensation is employed in impressing the principle.

It is characteristic, that, in the person of our Lord, the three principles are combined, and in him alone. He was God in the flesh; His death was the atonement; and His ascent to heaven was the visible proof of the future existence of man.

Why do I urge you to exert your faculties on subjects like those? It is because, without a full and firm conviction of the truth of Christianity, you can have no

practical Christianity. Is it not written, "That without faith it is impossible to please God?" Yet, what is the faith of accident, the faith of conjecture, or the faith of ignorance? They perish before the first breath of scepticism. To what other cause than to this indolent and uninquiring belief have all the religious corruptions of man been due? What is superstition, but the irrationality of religious fear? What is fanaticism, but the irrationality of religious fantasy? True religion, at once ardent and wise, at once sensitive and practical; at once giving us patience for the humblest duties of life, and lifting our hearts to the noblest contemplations of heaven; true religion, alike the guide and the consoler of man, the great teacher of the realities of things here, and the conqueror of the grave, is the offspring of that faith alone, which awakes the slumber of the soul by the summons of the understanding.

I propose the theory of the three principles, as a matter of evidence. By exhibiting the *consistency* of the three dispensations, it gives to each a new testimonial of its divine origin; while, in the spirit of that consistency, it offers, also, an elucidation of the three remarkable circumstances—

Why, three religions, so wholly different in form, though all founded on the same truths, should have been successively given.

Why, in the two earlier of those religions, visible ascents of man to immortality should have been displayed, yet none in the third.

And why, the third should have been marked for suffering from its commencement, while no similar stamp of trial was fixed upon either of the former.

I demand no assent to those views, but on the ground of inquiry. But, in an age like ours, we have no right

to disregard a single additional proof of the reality of our holy faith. Infidelity, of late, has changed its tone; it is no longer contemptuous, insulting, and audacious. It now assumes the pretence of reluctant doubt, laborious learning, and conscientious investigation. The bold blasphemer startles us no more; he wears the cloak of the student, and solicits us into temptation. Yet, more desperate corruptions of the truth of God, more profligate attempts to unsettle the soul, or a more inveterate passion to throw man into the grasp of moral death, were never exhibited in the most ostentatious periods of hostility to the Gospel. The volumes to which I allude are chiefly continental. They have not yet made serious progress in this country, *but they are advancing*; and wherever they shall triumph, the belief in a GOD, the reliance on an ATONEMENT, and the hope of a glorious IMMORTALITY, will be no more.

There is a tremendous weight of ignorant, insidious, and fierce opinion at this hour in action against Christianity. The contest exists throughout Europe. In one great section of the nominal Christian Church, the spirit of religion is totally extinguished in superstitious forms, and personal vice. In another, a subtle scepticism, affecting to treat inspiration as an accident, and the Word of God as the tradition of man, degrades the Scriptures to the level of a legend.

But, how is this two-fold assault to be resisted? The only weapons must be vigorous originality, vigorous logic, and vigorous learning. The minister of the Church must no more escape under a cloud of common-places. He must meet the conflict, in the strength of human and spiritual knowledge.

He lives in an age of presumptuous, yet, unquestionably, of growing intelligence. He must not suffer himself to

fall behind its requisitions. He lives in an age of solemn scoffing, and haughty prejudice. He must prepare himself for its encounter. He lives in an age of startling changes in the European mind; of the direct advance of the most fatal of all superstitions to authority; and of a general heresy of heart, as well as of religion. He must be furnished with the Christian panoply for this gigantic, and, perhaps, final struggle.

The pulpit is the natural refuge of truth; and the time may be approaching, when it will be the *only* refuge. What, then, should the minister of the Gospel be? A creature of intellectual accomplishment, and of hallowed energy; a bold, fervent, and indefatigable champion of the truth, with all the treasures of Scriptural and human knowledge open before him, and all employed in the testimony and the triumph of Revelation.

He must be no trifler with the triflers of doctrine; no softener of the deep things of God to the capricious ears of the world; no speaker of a flattering phraseology to hardened consciences. He must be full of ardor for the glory of God; full of earnestness for the salvation of men; and full of prayer for that Divine Spirit, which illumines, invigorates, and directs to the amplest purposes, the accomplished faculties of the Christian mind.

It is only by this large and sound possession of knowledge, that he can form himself upon the model of his Lord.

“Every Scribe, which is instructed into the Kingdom of God, is like unto a man that is an Householder, who bringeth out of his treasure things *new* and *old*.”

SERMON XXII.

A NEW YEAR'S ADMONITION.

BY REV. DAVID S. DOGGETT, D.D.

*Editor of the Quarterly Review of the Methodist Episcopal
Church, South.*

"This year thou shalt die."—Jer. xxviii. 16.

I ASCEND this sacred place to-day with the words of an oracle upon my lips ; words which startle and confound by the appalling intelligence which they bring at a time when we usually indulge the most pleasing anticipations. The ancient oracles uttered responses upon important occasions, and imparted, at least, an air of solemnity to great transactions. But their responses were always given with a studied ambiguity, so as, in no event, to risk their credit. The oracle of God also speaks, but with a distinctness which involves no obscurity, and with a tone of confidence which indicates no fear of the result. The prediction awaits the event with certainty. It speaks, and it is done. It commands, and it stands fast for ever.

I do not announce this passage in the spirit of prophecy, or even of gloomy foreboding. I do not desire to impair the joyous emotions with which you greet the opening year ; to cast a shade over the bright sunshine of your hopes ; to throw a melancholy complexion over the cheering prospects before you ; to check the elasticity

of your spirits; or to fill you with a superstitious apprehension of your approaching end. It were cruel thus to tamper with the feelings of the human heart. I wish, rather, to bring your joys to the test of reality; to attemper your vivacity with the sobriety of truth; to impress upon you one of the momentous facts of your history; to remind you of a crisis which you must inevitably meet. I wish thus to induce you to build your happiness upon a foundation which no vicissitude can shake, and to fix your admiring gaze upon a sky which no cloud can darken. By avoiding such subjects as our text suggests, we deceive ourselves, and, in vain, strive to be happy by cherishing our ignorance. An ancient prince required a servant to follow him, and daily to exclaim in his ears, "Man, thou art mortal." This is the truth which it is my duty to inculcate to-day. In discharging it, I direct your attention,

I. To the dread authority with which the words are spoken. It is no less than the authority to create and to destroy. One Being alone possesses it; and no one has a right to assume it but by his permission. He can dispose of his creatures as he will. He kindled, and can extinguish, at pleasure, the fires which light up the temple of the universe. Nay, the whole universe itself, would dissolve, like the morning mist, if he should countermand the original order at which it arose into existence. It is thus, as a master, as a sovereign, as a judge, he can say to man, universally, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return;" and, to any particular individual, "This year thou shalt die."

In the exercise of this high prerogative, he has assigned a period to the life of man; he has decreed, that its continuity should be interrupted; that it should become one of the very conditions of human existence to die,

This decree was no part of his original plan, but was superinduced by sin. Had that plan remained uninvaded, the stream of life would, without impediment, have gently rolled its tranquil waters into the peaceful bosom of eternity; and we should have witnessed the pleasing spectacle of human beings passing, without sickness or decay, into a state of immortality. But the scene has been changed, the current has become obstructed, and the present has been violently severed from the future.

Absolute and irreversible as is the decision which has affixed the seal to man's mortality, it nevertheless appears, that there is something conditional in the term of his life; that he has a species of subordinate control over its duration; that, within those unalterable limits, in which, at its utmost extent, it has been reduced to a comparative span, the great Creator has conferred upon him the power of abridging or protracting it, by conforming to certain conditions. Thus, on the one hand, a disregard of the means of self-preservation, or a violation of the laws of health, will bring on a premature death; and, on the other, a careful observance of them, will generally insure a long and happy life; the attainment of which is urged upon every one, not only by an enlightened self-love, but by the weight of a strong moral obligation.

Some persons, it must be conceded, seem, by the providential circumstances in which they have been placed, to be deprived of any voluntary control over the duration of their lives. Death, with respect to them, cannot be postponed by such agencies as are usually successful in other instances. They are those who are subject to hereditary diseases; who are deprived of the means of self-protection from imminent danger; those whose organs are constitutionally defective; those whose vital energies have been exhausted: and others, who,

perhaps, might be properly enumerated in this catalogue. Nor is this difference, apparently so considerable, any just ground of exception to the benevolence or equity of the Divine Being. For those who are chiefly affected by it, are, in fact, not less the objects of his favor, though they enjoy less of animal life. Take, for example, the cases of infants, of abject paupers, of revolting deformity, of idiots, and of incurable valetudinarians. Viewing man, as to the entire period of his existence, and as to the merciful purposes of God, brevity of life, with respect to them, is a greater blessing than longevity.

In addition to these considerations, it is indisputable, that there must often be reasons of a moral character, not ascertainable by man, but existing in the mind of God, why some persons, either on their own account, or that of others, to whom they are related, should not be permitted to prolong their lives. Each individual is endowed with a definite capacity for moral good or evil in a probationary state. He may reach the limits of this capacity in the judgment of God, when there could be no external indications of it, and thus render it necessary that the scene of his existence should be changed, so as to correspond with the type of his character. Accordingly, one may be ripe for heaven; the cup of another's iniquity may be full; and the death of a third may accomplish some paramount good in the system of the world. In all these examples, whether of voluntary or involuntary control over the duration of life, the same divine sovereignty is equally displayed. Let us now,

II. Contemplate the nature of that event which puts the limit to human life, whether conditionally or otherwise. And, here, we cannot forbear a reflection, upon the universality of this awful curse. It has smitten with blasting and mildew every earthly object. The whole

assemblage of living beings, originally designed to luxuriate in the vigor, and to sparkle in the glories of uninterrupted existence is doomed to die. The glow worm must extinguish his little spark in the night of death. The myriads of insects that crawl upon the earth, or float upon the atmospheric wave, must die. Quadrupeds, fishes, fowls, must die. Vegetation must die. And, last of all, man himself must die: and the world, instead of being a living temple, animated and adorned with harmonious orders of rejoicing creatures, must become their common vortex, one vast sepulchre, the tomb of all that hath life. Here, my brethren, death reigns in dark and dismal dignity, from age to age, and from pole to pole. In all probability, ours is the only spot over which his dread dominion extends. In other places, existence, beyond a doubt, yet glitters in primeval beauty. The angel of death has never visited their healthful abodes, to pour his vial on the air, to scatter over them the seeds of consumption, and to wake from their happy population the wail of lamentation and of woe. Here we breathe the infected atmosphere of a loathsome hospital, and while we witness the havoc which appalls us, we expire in our turn.

From this brief digression, let us retrace our steps, to mingle our sympathies over the death-scenes of some of the creatures of God; for in all them death is a solemn and an affecting event. It is always full of tragic interest wherever it occurs. The domestic animal, which has shared our caresses and protected our persons, cannot die without a struggle, and we cannot witness its death without a sigh. The beautiful bird which, by its graceful carol, has charmed our morning walks, may be struck down by the thoughtless archer, with the very note of music falling from its tongue; but that archer repents

the deed, while he beholds its dying gasp and its painful spasm. The noble steed, which has borne with untiring energy his delighted rider from place to place, extracts from his eyes the tear of pity as he groans and struggles in the agonies of death; and the friend of our bosom almost carries us with himself when the final adieu falters on his expiring lips.

In this aspect of the subject, we behold one event common to all animated beings. But how different is the death of a man from that of the inferior creatures. The throes and the pangs of the dying hour may not be essentially different. The mere extinction of life may be identical in both. Yet, admitting this, what is the death of a mocking bird, of a spaniel, or of a horse, to the death of a man? They differ from him, first, in their comparative dignity in the scale of being. What a small breach is made in that scale by the loss of either of them. Man stands at their head, and his death opens within it a chasm which admits of no reparation. They differ, secondly, as to the kind and extent of their relations. All sentient beings have affinities, and all are united to their fellows by ties more or less intimate, and more or less felt when death dissolves them. But none are so wide, so important, so influential, as those which bind man to man, and whose dissolution vibrates to an unmeasured distance, and produces a shock in kindred minds as intense and as lasting as human sensibilities will allow. They differ, thirdly, as to their continued existence. They cease with the moment of their dissolution. Their bones bleach in the winds of heaven, crumble into dust, and the wave of oblivion rolls over them for ever. But such is not the end of man. He suspends his earthly existence, to gather up his strength for another more capacious and enduring. He passes, for a moment,

beneath the wave which covers all earthly beings, to rise again to the surface, and make for the shore of a distant and boundless territory on the other side of "death's cold flood," to join his destiny with its inhabitants in the pursuits of an exalted happiness, or in the endurance of eternal pain.

It is reflections like these that lend their influence to the death of man, that clothe it with a solemnity which settles not down upon that of any other being; yea, which stamp it with more thrilling interest than the fall of empires, or the destruction of the whole irrational creation together. Pope, in his "Essay on Man," has said, that the Divine Being

"Sees with equal eyes, as Lord of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall."

No, my brethren, the poet's hypothesis may suit his scepticism or his rhymes, but it does dishonor to God, and injustice to man. The death of a hero and of a sparrow is, in the eyes of God, an event as different as are their capacities and their spheres in the order of nature. The one sinks into nothing, as it drops into the abyss of corruption; the other sends the knell of his departure throughout the invisible universe. That of the one may be compared to the fall of a bubble, which bursts when it comes in contact with a solid substance; that of the other, to the fall of a planet which would agitate the earth itself from centre to circumference. We proceed to point out,

III. The particularity of the prophetic declaration, "This year thou shalt die." All its terms are definite. It specifies the person, and it specifies the time of his death. The individual designated was Hananiah, who, in opposition to all the preceding prophets, and to Jeremiah, his contemporary, flattered the people that the

captivity in Babylon would continue only two years, instead of seventy. He professed to announce his message by Divine authority, and wished to recommend a lie by the name of God. Jeremiah replied, that he would rejoice in the fulfilment of so agreeable a prediction, but that it was certain God had not dictated it, and that, as a proof of his imposture, and a punishment of his crime, he should pay the forfeit of his life that very year. Within two months, he suffered the penalty of his guilt, and demonstrated the truth of God.

No prophet appears in our midst to announce in our ears to-day, such doleful tidings as fell upon those of Hananiah; nor have we any means by which we can ascertain with accuracy the nearness of death. Any who pretend to do it, either for themselves or others, are superstitious, and such is the character of all those omens with which many a well-meaning person is tortured from day to day. God may, indeed, sometimes, give a premonition of such an event, by these or other methods, but they are rare exceptions to his ordinary plan. He says himself, "In such an hour as ye know not, the Son of Man cometh." Were it otherwise, the ends of life would be frustrated, its lawful pleasures annihilated, and its indispensable duties utterly suspended.

We may, nevertheless, inquire how far the particularity of the text is applicable to ourselves; what force we should, personally, attach to the alarming words, "This year thou shalt die." In clearing this inquiry, it is proper to recall the admitted truth, that each individual now living must die at some time or other. The sentence is passed, and there is neither revocation nor repeal of it. It is in a course of incessant accomplishment. It is written in glaring capitals upon the walls of each clay tenement.

It is further certain, that great multitudes will die during the present year. In order to realize this assertion, it may be alleged, that the remoter term of life being irrevocably fixed, some, in the vast population of the globe, are reaching it every year, and every day in the year. These, successively, completing the short cycle of their sublunary career, are perpetually passing away from time. Besides, according to our own observation, many more die within this period than ever arrive at it. Indeed, a very small proportion of the race ever do. Consequently, those who die annually, and will die this year, are multiplied in the same ratio.

This astounding fact is confirmed by actual calculations of the dying and of the dead; calculations which rest upon satisfactory grounds. According to one of these, eight hundred millions of human beings die in every generation; a period consisting of thirty-three years. Twenty-five millions die every year; sixty thousand every day; two thousand seven hundred every hour; forty-five every minute, and one in about every two seconds. If this be true, since the commencement of these exercises, two thousand of our fellow beings have passed the gulf of death, and many are now entering the portals of the eternal world.

Another view may serve to impress upon our minds the personality of the text. It is what is called, in other respects, the doctrine of chances; so called, on account of human ignorance. We constitute an essential and an inseparable part of the great mass of our death-stricken humanity. Where all must die, and many, not less perhaps than twenty-five millions, will inevitably die this year, we run precisely an equal risk, if risk it may be called, with those who are placed in circumstances similar to our own. We have, therefore, no right to exempt

ourselves from the common lot, especially as we know that God is no respecter of persons. It is, doubtless, settled in the counsels of heaven, that many, now rich, and wise, and happy, and healthy, and gay, and fashionable, and beautiful, will close their eyes in death this year.

We may bring these words, it may be, yet more closely home. The chances of life, with considerable numbers of the human family, are greatly diminished. The aged, the infirm, the diseased, the exposed, are more liable to death than others; and many of them will more certainly expire this year. Finally, it is not at all improbable, that God, in the disposal of human events, will send, this year, upon various parts of the world, the visitations of his righteous providence, in the form of pestilence, famine, and war. No year ever passes in which some or all of these do not somewhere commit their havoc amongst mankind. All three have lately played their destructive engines with tremendous effect. They may perform their appointed operations again, at no very distant day, and select our favored land as the most eligible theatre for the disastrous display. In this event, countless multitudes will surely die. Already has the angel of death flapped his pestilential wings, and spread disease through the infected air. Already has his ponderous tread shaken our shores, and alarmed our citizens. Already have the first fruits of his harvest been gathered; and speedily may the features of his ghastly visage be visible in our streets. What ravages may the terrific cholera soon make in places exempted from his previous scourge. Should this dread fatality befall us, which Heaven avert, how many of us now flushed with health, may pay the tribute of our lives to his entrance amongst us!

In view of all these considerations, there is an admonitory sense in which it may be said to each one of us

to-day, "This year thou shalt die." We know that many a year has opened with the bright promise of hope, and closed with the desolations of death. Behold, my brethren, how the past, which was ushered in as auspiciously as the present, has terminated its career! How many a family has been widowed and orphaned. How many a domestic circle presents to the eye a sad vacancy, but recently filled by an idolized object. How many an household, united by the bonds of the tenderest endearment, has been totally dissolved; and silence now reigns amidst scenes but lately enlivened with the voice and the charms of innocence and mirth. Many a noble heart ceased to beat, and many a lovely form faded away at the approach of death, last year; and many a sigh was wafted upon the winds of heaven, from distant places, to homes which waited to be gladdened by the notes of a welcome return!

Similar scenes will be enacted this year; and though I am not much accustomed to such reflections, I may be allowed to indulge them upon an occasion which renders them at least, excusable. I am not given to melancholy anticipations. Ah, would that youthful levity had been seasoned with a just conviction of the evils of life, and that the glow of a fervid imagination had not invited those violent shocks which make so fearful a wreck of human hopes. Pardon me, for yielding to a temporary impulse of this character, at the hazard of seeming to funeralize, rather than compliment my congregation. The blooming cheek will grow pale, and the manly brow will recline on death's leaden pillow this year. The earthly paradise, attractive with beauty, and redolent with perfume, will admit the monster, whose tainted breath will poison and wither its fruits and its flowers. Mournful pictures pass before my eyes to-day! In one part of our community, I see the chamber where affection watches with a

palpitating heart, the declining object of its protracted solicitude. In another, one has just expired, amidst the stifled sobs and suffocating grief of surrounding relatives and friends. There, a solemn procession follows the slow hearse to the tomb; and yonder, a dispersing company returns from the last sad offices of humanity, to recur, for a season, to what, as yet, seems but a troubled dream. Thus, as it is said, "One generation goeth, and another cometh; and the earth is, by turns, vacated and replenished by troops of succeeding pilgrims."

A few interrogations may appropriately conclude this practical but painful discussion.

Should you die this year, what would be the temporal condition of your families? To the extent of your ability, you are responsible for their worldly prosperity; and though it is no man's duty to leave them in affluence, it is his duty to provide for their support and their education. Have you, in humble dependence upon the blessing of God, exercised a reasonable degree of provident forecast, that, in the event of sudden death, your widows and your orphans might enjoy the means of a competent livelihood? Or, by your neglect, your prodigality, or your indolence, would such an event plunge them into the evils of hopeless poverty, or, at least, into those of protracted and expensive law-suits? To all such, the prophetic charge to Hezekiah is an imperative duty, "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live!"

Again: should you die this year, what would be the moral and spiritual condition of your families, and especially of your children? Have you endeavored to lay the foundation of their happiness and usefulness, in the fear of God; so to "train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," that, upon your death bed,

you could entertain consoling hopes of their salvation? Or, would your departure from them, leave them no other guides, through life, than those lessons of vanity and worldly policy which yourselves have pursued? Or, would a father's and a mother's example be the watchword and the bane of a remote posterity, and result in the catastrophe of their ruined immortality?

Should you die this year, what would be the state of the community, the country, and the world in which you live, so far as your capabilities of improving them are concerned? In these great relations God has placed you, and no contingencies can alter or annihilate them. Would they be better for your having lived? Would the amount of personal or social happiness have been increased by your influence, however diminutive? Would a solitary individual have occasion to ascribe a sensation of relief, or a virtuous impression to your exertions? Or, would you be justly chargeable with augmenting the vast aggregate of human wretchedness, and your death be regarded rather in the light of a blessing than a loss to society?

Finally: Should you die this year, what, in all probability would be the character of your death? Have your lives been such as to insure "a good hope through grace" of a triumphant, or even a peaceful passage to the heavenly Canaan? Or, would your exit foredoom your final rejection? Many happy deaths will occur this year, to illustrate the unimpaired power of the Christian religion. Many a weary traveller will enter into rest. Ministering spirits will kindle into rapture over many a well-contested prize, and the population of the new Jerusalem will be swollen by myriads of successful candidates for "crowns which fade not away," and mansions "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

And, O horrible to tell! Many an ill-fated arrival will people the habitations of the damned, this year! Thou God, to whom "all things are naked and open," and to whom "hell itself is without a covering," hide from our eyes the sight of so heart-rending a tragedy?

Learn, my hearers, the lesson suggested by the text, and inculcated by the Son of God; "be ye also ready." Let all your ransomed powers agonize to make this one achievement. And, if God shall say to any of you, in language which needs no interpreter, "This year thou shalt die," you will be able to respond in the last words of the Apocalypse, "even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly:" Amen.

[The above sermon is taken from the Southern Methodist Pulpit, by permission of the Editor, Rev. C. F. Deems, D.D.]

SERMON XXIII.

THE RECAPITULATION OF ALL THINGS IN CHRIST.

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“That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ.”—Ephesians i. 10.

I. JEHOVAH, revealed to us in the Scriptures, has, from eternity, existed in the plenitude of an infinite and unchangeable being, which, as to its essence, is absolutely one; the unity of the Godhead being the fundamental idea of revealed religion. The infinite blessedness in which he has thus eternally existed, had a direct relevancy to the ineffable inbeing and actings of the three Divine persons—equal in power and glory, which constitute, in the unity of that essence, the adorable Trinity of the Divine nature. It is to be observed, however, that the unity and the trinity thus revealed to us, concerning the being of God, are predicated of different things, and not of the same thing; the former of the very essence thereof, the latter of the exact mode in which it exists.

The infinite God, in the exercise of that boundless goodness which is so great an attribute of his nature, and for the illustration of his own glory as the grand end of all his works, was pleased to manifest himself in the

whole work of creation; therein communicating to us, as one portion of his handy-work, a dependent being; and, throughout the whole, exhibiting his divine beneficence, wisdom, and power. Thus the heavens and the earth, and all that is therein, were created by Jesus Christ, the true God, and second person in the trinity; and he who became incarnate, that he might save sinners, was not only with God, from eternity, but, as God, the sole creator of all things—the only source of all dependent existence—the absolute author of all created intelligence.

The direct relations of all things and all beings, are only to God; the relations which all of them have with each other, are merely indirect, and through God. From him, and by him, and to him, are all things. Whatever is primary and fundamental in their condition, connects them, directly, with the throne of God. It is only those things which are secondary and incidental that connect them with each other; and even these, as before stated, indirectly through God. It is in him that we live, and move, and have our being. The laws of nature, as we call them, are no more than the rules of his procedure, which, by their constancy, have become obvious to us; the duties which we owe to one another, are results of still more exalted duties which we owe to him; and our very power to bless each other, is strictly measured by his blessings to us.

II. A universe created, constituted, and governed, in that manner, presents to us the highest conceivable picture of felicity and glory. That it should wholly fall away from that condition, seems at once the most inscrutable mystery, and the most appalling calamity. God, in his blessed Word, has clearly explained to us the mode in which sin was introduced into that portion of his universe which appertains, in a special manner, to us; and, more

briefly, the manner of its original entrance, at an earlier period; amongst the angelic hosts. Aside from these Divine teachings, we know, only, that our glory and felicity are gone; and that sin and misery have made their abode with us. It is when we sit down at the feet of Jesus, and learn of him, that the great story of our ruin and our recovery is exhibited to us, in all its fearful guilt, and all its unsearchable grace.

By sin, the angels, who fell, lost their first and sublime estate. By sin, the human race has lost the image of God in which we were created, and is exposed in the estate in which we stood, to all the miseries which flow from the just displeasure of God, in this world, and in that which is to come. By sin, the very earth we inhabit lies under the curse of God, and all creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together. The whole scheme of God's goodness, and wisdom, and power, as manifested in a heavenly and an earthly creation, in which sin had no place, is deranged by the entrance of sin into the heavens, and upon the earth. The relations of every part of that creation, to all the other parts, are wholly deranged; and the relations of the whole, and of every part to God, are most signally changed. Where there was order, there is confusion; where there was peace, there is anguish; where there was purity, there is pollution; where there was eternal life, there is death and hell.

There is a marvellous difference, in the dealings of God, with the two classes of his fallen creatures. Of the angels, a part only fell. Them he cast out for ever, but cursed not the bright abode which they had forfeited; instead of which, he provided for them a separate prison house of despair. Our guilty race fell absolutely, and without reserve. Them he cast out, without exception; but not all of them for ever. The groaning earth, which

they had polluted, he cursed for their sakes, but not eternally; instead of which, the abode prepared for the Devil and his angels, shall relieve the earth of the eternal presence of impenitent men. Wonderful are the dealings of God, and his ways past finding out!

III. In the counsels of eternity, the set purpose of God was to reconstruct the universe, thus polluted and deranged by sin. Heaven was already emptied of its fallen angels, reserved in chains of darkness, for the judgment of the great day. For the earth and for man—no more covenant of works—no more, do and live; but a covenant of grace—believe and live; life and immortality brought to light by the gospel!

From motives drawn from within his own breast, and which we express by saying—of his good pleasure: without the least claim on the part of his fallen creatures, and therefore, of free grace: without all accountability for his own conduct, and, therefore, of sovereign grace: by a method most thorough, and most complete, and, therefore, of efficacious grace; for an end worthy of God, and, therefore, for his own glory: it is thus, that God proceeds in the sublime proposal of his purposed reconstruction of his universe—in a way of infinite mercy as it regards fallen man.

Our Divine Redeemer has told us nothing more plainly than that, in order to enter the kingdom of heaven, we must be born again. We have lost the image of God, in which we were created: we must be restored to that lost image, or we must perish for ever. For us, all that was lost by the fall—nay more—is restored in Christ; for, in him, we are made partakers of the divine nature. In him, the Godhead has taken our nature into eternal union with his own nature; and he is formed in us the hope of glory. By him, also, the Eternal Spirit, purchased by

his blood, makes us temples in which he dwells—living temples—a habitation for God. A service and an enjoyment of God, infinitely beyond what had been possible under the covenant of works, if man had never fallen, awaits the redeemed under the covenant of grace, and that reconstruction of the universe which is to be accomplished under it.

The angels that kept their first estate, look to Christ, the head over all things, and, as such, the head of the Church, and in him are confirmed for ever in that heavenly estate. He who created them by the word of his power, confirms them eternally in their exalted condition; and does this as he is the Christ of God. Redeemed men—the peculiar purchase of his blood, and the most surprising monument of his mercy and love—find him their very life, when they appear with him in glory. Fallen angels lie under his sentence in endless despair; and lost men will find no part of their condemnation more terrific, than that which will spring from the certainty, that he whom they despised and rejected, and who judged and condemned them, was both able and willing to have saved them. All created intelligences, and the earth itself purified by fire, and emerging with the new heavens from the bosom of that old creation which is vanishing away, reunited again in one body, under one head, will be gathered together in one—all things recapitulated in Christ. In a sense still more exalted than that in which, at their creation, God pronounced all the works of his hands to be very good, will all be presented, at last, faultless before God; and the grand problem, created by the introduction of sin into the universe, be finally solved, to the infinite glory of Jehovah of Hosts. Good—very good—faultless, immaculately faultless, will be all the procedure, and all the results, throughout all the universe;

the unsearchable riches of grace, and the awful severity of justice, alike exalting the majesty of the Son of God.

IV. In the course of creation, and in the order of providence, in the development of nature, and in the unfolding of all the dispensations of mercy, there is an everlasting concatenation and dependence of all things. They follow each other in a sublime order—every thing complete in itself—and yet all but portions of a still more complete whole. All things have a force peculiar to themselves, and then all work together with an irresistible power; and the end of each, and the result of the whole, is for good to them that love God. The dispensation of the fulness of times, is the vast cycle in which they all work together, the immense period through which they all emerge in their successive manifestations; conspiring to that good end of the economy of the completion of times, when all shall be once more brought under an absolute and infinite headship, and that in Jesus Christ.

Before any work of creation at all—before all existence save that of the infinite, eternal, and unchangeable Spirit, which fills immensity—even from everlasting—was the period of gestation in the Divine mind of those boundless thoughts, which, for his own glory, all the fulness of the dispensation of times, was to make manifest. Thoughts of a work of creation only less immense, than he who fills immensity. Thoughts of an order of providence, covering the immensity of his creation and extending to eternity.

Then burst forth the work of angelic creation—the calling into being of cherubim and seraphim—the thrones, and dominions, and principalities and powers—the sublime hierarchies of the unseen world. This first, great period, of whose duration we know nothing, divides itself in two most distinct portions. It may have been almost from the depths of eternity, up to the fall

of a portion of these bright intelligences, that the first portion of this angelic period flowed on: and from that fearful catastrophe, to the creation of man, the second portion of that period rolled past the throne of God. Ages—it may be countless ages—of which we know so little, and which it is so easy for the imagination to crowd with all purest and most exalted things; but in the midst of which God has revealed to us a revolt against his infinite majesty in heaven itself.

Next came the creation of man, in the image of God. A new race; in this agreeing with the angels, that each one was a separate activity, an individual and responsible power in the universe; but in this differing from them, that it was strictly a race—all created of one blood—and not, like the angelic hosts, a mere collection, no matter how immense, of isolated individuals, neither descended from, nor related to each other. To this original and fundamental distinction between the nature of men and that of angels, is to be traced, perhaps, as much as to any other cause, the vast difference in the career and destiny of these two great families of God's intelligent creatures. And this part of the dispensation of the fulness of times, like the one that went before it, is divided into two portions, by a revolt against God; a revolt now in paradise, as before in heaven. "By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

The covenant made with Adam, for himself and his posterity, was broken by Adam, both for himself and them; and the first portion of man's dispensation on earth witnessed only his own ruin. How futile all our attempts to save our souls by our own works must appear, when we reflect, that this requires of us, in our fallen condition, two things, the smallest of which was beyond the strength

of Adam, before he fell ; for we must begin by retrieving what has been lost by the fall, and after that, we must continue in that likeness of God, we have first to recover. There lay open before God, if we may thus speak, three courses, either of which, as far as we can comprehend, he might have taken with man, after the fall. He might have left the whole race to perish, as he did all the fallen angels : or, he might have provided some remedy, by which the whole race would inevitably and necessarily have been recovered and saved : or, he might have interposed in that manner, which, taking in the whole scope of his own being and attributes, and the whole nature of man, would the most perfectly illustrate the glory of God, in providing a redemption adequate for all men, but effectual only to such as should receive it, by grace through faith ; passing by the rest, and condemning them for their sins. It is obvious, that the first, or the second method, would have been infinitely simple and direct ; the first, a mere illustration of his justice ; the second, of his compassion. God has chosen the third ; and, by means of it, his justice and his mercy alike, along with all else that constitutes his glory and blessedness, will be made supremely and eternally manifest to his universe. This Divine dispensation of grace, for the salvation of sinners of the race of man, develops itself throughout all our human dispensation after the fall ; and, when it is absolutely consummated and completed, all things will be recapitulated in Jesus Christ, and the whole universe, so long defaced and deranged by sin, be united again under one head, even the glorified God-man !

It is this vast and glorious portion of the dispensation of the fulness of times, of which all the Scriptures most fully treat. What went before it, is but briefly dwelt upon in the lively oracles ; only enough, perhaps, to make

us fully comprehend the relations of this part to the entire spiritual system of the universe. What follows after it, in the depths of the eternity to come, is only indicated in the most general manner. No eye ever saw, no ear ever heard, no heart ever conceived, what God will do, finally and for ever, for those whose names shall be found written in the Lamb's Book of Life; when the kingdom of Messiah is delivered up to God, even the Father, on that sublime record of complete redemption, and God will be all in all. On the other hand, the wildest imagination can scarcely embody the dimëst horror of that lake of torment, in which death itself shall die, and hell be consumed for ever!

The covenant of grace, springing from the bosom of God, and conceived from all eternity, is administered in different ways, but is still really administered, throughout all that second part of our human dispensation of which we were just speaking, as extending from the fall of man, to the consummation of all things. Before there was a gathered and visible Church in the world; before there was any outward mark, separating between God's people and God's enemies; before there was any written revelation from heaven; before there were any office bearers, or any permanent signs and seals of that covenant of grace, it was, nevertheless, administered, in a way then sufficient, and also really Divine; and the Bride of the Lamb, still found her spouse faithful to her. Then came the call of Abraham, in the midst of the idolatries of Ur of the Chaldees, to be the father of the faithful. After that followed the law given from Sinai, and the great ceremonial and typical dispensation, and holy men of God speaking, from age to age, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and all the array of God's wondrous dealings with his ancient people. And when the set time was

come, God sent forth his only begotten Son, made of a woman, made under the law; God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world; received up into glory—the incontrovertible mystery of godliness! Then came the day of Pentecost; the outpouring of the Spirit; the Scriptures completed; the Church of God re-organized afresh for its great labor of truth and love; and the long ages of conflict and of grace, of trial and of triumph, in the midst of which, thus far run out, we stand in our lot to-day. Thus far have we come; so much have we already seen or known; and, by the grace of God, we are what we are. The current, flowing from eternity to eternity, has reached this mark, where our feet touch its margin, and our hearts sigh to launch away upon it. But all things are not yet gathered together in one, nor is the dominion of Christ yet set up over them, in its final and infinite fulness; and, as yet, therefore, the dispensation of the fulness of times is not completed.

And what are the dispensations which are to come? If we will simply and sincerely believe God, we need not err concerning them. The great promise of the Old Testament Scriptures was the incarnation of the Son of God, his first coming as the Saviour of sinners. The great promise of the New Testament Scriptures, is his second coming, without sin, unto salvation; the second advent of the Redeemer glorified. Though now we behold him not, yet we know that he is infinitely exalted at the right hand of God, a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and the forgiveness of sins. Nor has he left us comfortless. But, according to his gracious promise, he has sent us another Comforter, even the Spirit of all truth, all life, and all holiness; who has made his abiding place in the hearts of Christ's followers; who abides there

still, and who will abide there continually, till the promise of the Saviour, and the immediate dispensation of the Comforter shall end in the visible manifestation of the God-man! The personal dispensation of Jesus Christ, if the grand idea may be so expressed, is not one continuous, but is a varied and successive manifestation, continually increasing in glory and majesty. There was first his personal ministry, ending with his ascension up into glory: this he often calls the kingdom of heaven, properly and simply. Then followed that kingdom with power, even the power of the Holy Ghost, in the regeneration and sanctification of men, in a manner, and to an extent, certainly never witnessed before the ascension of Christ; and which is the peculiar characteristic of that portion of the personal dispensation of Jesus, extending from his ascension to his second advent. There is still to come that kingdom with great glory, commencing with the return of the glorified master, and manifested throughout all those stupendous events—the resurrection, the judgment, the millennial reign, the final delivery of the kingdom itself upon the Book of Life, and the retributions of eternity.

The second person of the adorable Trinity, is the central object of all the revelation of God. It is he who created all things; it is he who governs all things; it is he who will judge all things; it is he alone who saves sinners; it is in him that all things are to be gathered at last under one head. It is only as we make him the grand object, that all our expositions of the dispensations that are past become true and consistent; and it is only while every thing culminates to him, that all the future opens itself to our comprehension. This Divine Word made flesh, and so two natures united in one new person for ever; once crucified, now exalted, hereafter to return in great glory: behold the key of all Scripture! Fixing upon the

point of that return, all things that remain are—and are then only—plain. With him will come all his holy angels. His living saints will be transfigured as they behold him; and the bodies of those that sleep with the pale nations of the dead, will arise in the first resurrection, as they hear his voice. Vengeance on the living who reject him—a final and eternal end of all offers of mercy—the continued death sleep of the impenitent, till the judgment of the righteous is over. That judgment ascertains, not the fact so much, as the manner and circumstances of their salvation, and their place in the mansions of the blessed, and amongst the redeemed host. With his glorious coming Satan is bound; and then are solved all the great problems of Antichrist—of the Gentiles—of God's ancient people—of the powers of this earth—of all apostacies—of all idolatries—and chief amongst all, of the visible Church. And then, "when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison;" and the wicked dead, "who lived not again until the thousand years were finished," shall come forth to shame and everlasting contempt in a resurrection of damnation. In this, deceived once more, and for the last time by Satan, they shall make one final, fearful struggle, before they and the devil, "and death and hell are cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death,"—the doom of all the wicked, "judged every man according to their works," by him "from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." In that tremendous day, "whosoever is found written in the Book of Life," may shout aloud, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" For then, indeed, will this corruption have put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality! And then will the dispensation of the fulness of times have come. Then will all things

which are in heaven, and which are on earth, be fully gathered together in one—even in Jesus Christ. Then shall he have reigned till he has put all enemies under his feet—the last of whom are hell and death. “And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” And then, at the name of Jesus, shall every knee bow, of all things divine, and earthly, and infernal; and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

V. God is exhibited to us in the Scriptures, in two very distinct relations to the universe. First, as he is its creator, proprietor, and natural ruler; secondly, as he is its moral governor and final judge. In a universe free from all sin, and, by consequence, from all defilement and derangement, these two relations of its sovereign Lord would seem to be absolutely co-incident. The entrance, and the prevalence of sin, on the other hand, would appear to distinguish them more and more from each other, in proportion to the extent and malignity of the sin, and the purpose of God to punish, to extirpate, or to pardon it. According to the mode of dealing with the subject, which God, in his infinite wisdom might select, would be the predominance which would be given to the natural, or to the moral aspect of his government; as, on the one hand, that of an absolute ruler; or as, on the other, that of a merciful parent, proposing remedies, giving aids, prescribing terms, and exhibiting motives to his rebellious children. As to the plan actually adopted by God, it has given a pre-eminence so absolute to the moral aspect of his dominion, that the head over the redeemed has been constituted, as such, head over all things; and invested, as the Saviour of sinners, with all power in heaven and upon earth. The mode of acquiring this power, and of

extending its actual efficacy—in other words, the person, the work, and the glory of the Divine Redeemer, are the grand theme of all revelation. The infinite humiliation, and the infinite exaltation of Christ, are the two extremes which the subject presents. From the first of these—up through all the gradations between them—the kingdom, and the power, and the glory of the Lord Jesus, gradually expand themselves. Through all the successive periods of all the dispensations of times, in all their fullness, his final and eternal headship struggles more and more into view; until it becomes, first, a fundamental truth, and then a palpable necessity; and, at last, the very crowning glory of the infinite grace of God, and the climax of all his plan of redeeming love.

The grace of God, as it is exhibited to lost men, is subject to several great and perpetual limitations, which characterize the very nature of its whole economy, under every manifestation. The first limitation is, that we have no access to God for salvation, except through a Divine Redeemer, crucified for us. The second is, that there is not, that there never was, and that there never will be, but one mediator between God and man. And the third is, that Jesus Christ, of Nazareth, is he—and his the only name given under heaven amongst men, whereby we can be saved. In like manner, there are conditions of our discipleship, responsive to these palpable limitations, and, like them, absolutely unchangeable. The first is, deny thyself; the second—take up thy cross; and the third—follow Jesus Christ in the regeneration. The nature of God, the nature of man, and the nature of salvation itself, for such sinners, by such a God—all united as elements, make up that awful problem, whose only gracious solution is, Christ crucified, unto them which are called the power of God, and the wisdom of God. The

incarnation of the Son of God, and his perfect obedience and infinite sacrifice; the justification of ruined sinners through faith in him; their regeneration and sanctification, through the eternal Spirit, purchased by his blood, and sent forth as the proof of his glorification; the second coming of Christ; the resurrection and reign of the saints; the resurrection of the wicked; the general judgment; the retributions of eternity! Point by point, as each great truth is exhibited; and step by step, as each sublime act is developed—the infinite fitness of Jesus Christ, to be head over all things, becomes more and more illustrious; and the infinite certainty, that the dispensation of the fulness of times can beget no other result, settles more and more profoundly into the hearts of his children. The security, and blessedness, and glory of union with him, become continually more striking, as we more perfectly realize what he is and what he does. The precious truth we have been contemplating inspires us with a confidence in him, and quickens our desires to be in him, and begets a readiness and an ability to serve, and to enjoy him, proportionate to the clearness with which we perceive all its power and its fulness; and the simplicity and sincerity with which we abandon ourselves to its influence over our souls. Nor can any thing afford evidence more clear and fearful, that they who are without Christ, must also needs be without God and without hope. Nor could one from the dead make it more certain, that they must perish without remedy, who shun and hate the only being in the universe who is able to bless, or to save them; and who outrage and insult not only the majesty, and the justice, but the compassion and love of him who is over all, God blessed for ever!

SUPPLEMENTARY ESSAY.

BY THOMAS P. AKERS.

RELIGIOUS CORRUPTION A PRELUDE TO NATIONAL RUIN.

THE ruin of a nation, infected with an impure faith, is evidently the result of an established law. Respecting the peculiar corruption of mankind before the flood, nothing definite is revealed in the Scriptures. It appears, however, that they had debased the original idea of God, and, as the natural working of the mind is to form a substitute, we suppose, they devised a system of false religion; and, by the waters of the deluge, were swept away from the face of the earth; they, and their idolatry together. The idolatrous Canaanites were destroyed, as the Mosaic history informs us, wholly on account of their idolatry. The corruption of the Jewish covenant was visited with a succession of tremendous and predicted calamities, wound up in the seventy years' captivity, which gave the Jews into the hands of a barbarian, left their temple in ashes, and broke them down from the ancient and illustrious kingdom of David and Solomon, into a trembling dependency; which, after committing the consummate crime of the crucifixion, was to be subverted by the son of Vespasian, in the midst of boundless slaughter. Without making a further specification, we may safely conclude, from the argument of all the past,

that, *the corruption of a nation's religion, is an inevitable prelude to her destruction.*

If the most powerful nation that ever existed in the world, could have survived, alike, the abandonment of a purely spiritual devotion, and the adoption of an idolatrous religion, Pagan Rome would still be "empress of the world." Rising from the condition of a colony, she had fought her way to the throne of the proudest empire ever committed to human control. And this supremacy was reached, not by those whims of fortune which sometimes elevate incapacity to sudden eminence, but by the real resistless superiority of arts and arms.

Asiatic conquerors had subdued more extensive territory, but their conquests were over barbarians. Their chariot wheels ploughed the sands of Arabia; the hoofs of their chargers broke the solitude of the Mongolian desert; and the blood of their bravest generals crimsoned the snows of Siberia. Like a swift, yet heavy inundation, they swept along the shores of the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, leaving behind them a broad track of desolation, and carrying with them only the remembrance of barren victories. They were fierce, rapid, and fruitless.

The Romans, on the contrary, overran the civilized as well as barbarous nations of the earth. Where civilization already existed, the people were compelled to adopt the manners and customs of Rome. Where barbarism had usurped the soil, it was either driven back into the wilderness, or bowed by a strong hand into salutary submission. Wherever Roman conquerors pressed their victories, they filled the land with the temples, the palaces, and the gorgeous theatres of their own matchless country. Every foot of territory acquired by conquest, was bound to the ancient capital by the inflexible authority of Roman laws, the unbroken

inheritance of illustrious names, and the tenacious tie of a common language. By forming this solid and symmetrical connection, the Roman Empire increased in strength, as its dominion enlarged; till the Emperor issued his mandates from a throne, that stood in the centre of an ever-widening circle of subjects; his crown, radiant with the rays of an unsetting sun; his sceptre, sweeping the circumference of the globe. Permanency of dominion was the very principle of their government. A receptacle of robbers, Rome yet became the mighty alembic of the world, in which every element of evil was fused together, and made to coalesce into strength. Surveying, even from this distance, the stupendous magnitude of that proud and haughty erection, the age and depth of its foundation, and the consummate policy and power that defended it, we may well forgive the merely human oracle that pronounced its seven hills the pillars of an eternal throne.

The sudden decline, and subsequent deep effeminacy of the Roman people, still perplex the infidel historian. Nor is his perplexity diminished, by reviewing the resources of the people who completed the overthrow of that pre-eminent seat of human power.

At the eastern extremity of Asia, a fugitive slave had collected a band of robbers; the band soon swelled into a tribe; the tribe became rapidly the nucleus of nations. At length a final impulse was given. The whole northern world started up as if by the sound of trumpet, dashed furiously down from the Carpathian mountains, and swept along, like a tameless torrent, in the direction of Italy. The approach of such a wild and motley multitude of invaders filled Rome with one roar of laughter. That a clan of uncultivated barbarians—the sudden and prolific abortion of the desert, should have the insane presumption

to marshal its rude strength against a power that defied the world, seemed, to the Romans, the very climax of madness.

Hannibal, had once tried the *metal* and felt the *weight* of the Roman sword. And, though his courage has given his name to immortality; though he subdued the successive barriers of the untrodden Alps; and led his conquering legions across the sunny plains of Italy; yet, when he reached the banks of the Tiber, a barrier rose up before him, and towered to a height and expansion that darkened, with an ominous gloom, the dazzling prize which had allured him to the home of Romulus, and cast a colossal shadow over his whole subsequent career. A torrent of more than fire—a stream of heroic steel and indignant courage, burst from the gates of Rome, and hunted the haughty son of Hamilcar to the very capital of Carthage. Filled with the remembrance of this and similar achievements, the Romans might justly scorn the naked valor and swarming numbers of the North.

The first movements of the barbarians were dubious and desultory; but still, the main tide kept steadily on, taking, continually, a deeper and broader channel, till it reached the confines of Italy. Suddenly, the whole splendid arena, from Propontis to Thermopylæ, was covered, as if by the overwhelmings of an ocean. Seventy cities of the eastern empire were already in ruins, and Rome awaited, in terror and amazement, the approach of an enemy, that seemed to be armed with weapons above the resources of man. To her the time of ten-fold tempest had come. While she was balancing between fear and wonder, those sons of storm had crossed the Tiber, and now the whole dusky multitude was thundering at her gates. Rude ignorance did the work of knowledge; poverty was more powerful than wealth;

disorder, wild as the waves, shamed the vigor of studied discipline; and even famine itself, but inflamed their courage, and nerved their arms, and directed the blows, which brought that fabric of ages, reeling, wall tower and gate, to the ground.

No conformity of circumstance can account for such an unexampled triumph. The problem admits of but one solution. Rome was purple with the blood of the people of God. Her houses were "the habitations of cruelty," filled with all the hideous abominations of Paganism. The "one true God" of the Bible had been supplanted by thirty thousand earth-born deities. Her decline resulted from this religious corruption, and her fall belonged to the course of nature. But, as if to make the Agent, as well as the cause of her ruin, palpable to all eyes, a nation of *beggars* was made the instrument of her punishment.

That the Popery of the present day is the legitimate offspring and heir of Paganism, no one, who takes the trouble to compare the two systems, can entertain a reasonable doubt. The *ancient* institution consisted in ceremonial pomp, founded on fable, and constructed with a view to please the people. In what consists the *modern*? If the great sin of Paganism was a substitution of many false gods for the "true;" the *nameless* crime, peculiar to Popery, is a substitution of many false mediators for the "true." In fact, the younger paganism differs from the elder, only, in worshipping by the name of a saint, the statue which its predecessor adored under the appellation of a goddess; and in kissing the *toe* of the *Pope*, instead of the *feet* of *Jove*. Both of them have perverted the Scriptures, and each has adopted the worship of idols—the same visible sign of corruption.

But Roman paganism, with all its subtlety, was the very essence of simplicity, compared to this lineal occupant of its throne. It was only a thing of external glitter; and there its powers and its ambition ended. It had none of those keener, and fiercer instruments of grasp and possession—the fangs and claws, that were yet to strike deep into the mighty heart of the world. It went down to the grave, for a time, side by side with its idle generation. A hundred years rolled over its sepulchre, and still it slept. The sun of the fifth century was already high up in the heavens, when the roar of revolution broke the silence of its tomb. Like a lion, waked too soon, it suddenly started up from slumber; shook its colossal form, and issued from its grave, refreshed, invigorated, and double-armed for battle.

On its return to the world, it found the old system of society broken into ruin, irreparable. A host of new and rival nations had arisen, sword in hand, and each was struggling for supremacy over the rest, on the very soil which had once lain smooth and uniform, as the late unbroken turf of its now deserted and tenantless tomb.

The world, too, had grown up into giant strength, and exhibited the marks of a manly intellectual capability. Chafed and kindled into warriors by the collision of hostile interests, every province that had revolted from the ancient empire, now wore a heavier armor, and walked with a bolder step, than even its once haughty, but afterward, effeminate ancestor.

To fight its battle through this iron multitude, up to empire, means were needed, more influential in their effects, than the feeble contrivances of the past. Hence, that shapeless and enormous birth—the Roman Breviary. The invention of a fraud, which strikes so directly at the root of all that deserves the name of religion, would be

utterly incredible, were it not that the Church of Rome still holds up before the eyes of the world the same hideous abomination. Miracles of bones, the worship of pictures, indulgences, confession, absolution, and, to crown the whole stupendous imposture, transubstantiation—the claim of man to be the maker of God! were the guilty and powerful means by which Paganism, new risen, forced its way through the tumult of nations, prostrating the Lombards, unnerving the Normans, and bowing in worship the bold barbarian crowns and helmets of the North and West, at the feet of an insolent Monk.

Having thus resumed its ancient seat of supremacy, over the ten sovereignties of the Western Empire, Paganism began its new career, under the name of Popery. Its course was upward and rapid. Early in the thirteenth century, it reached the summit of earthly dominion, and seized the sceptre of the world. Its rank and influence afforded resources sufficient for it to have carried Christianity to the ends of the earth. But its fuller triumph only served to disclose its deeper corruption; and, to the shame of human reason, and the terror of human suffering, in the hour of its consummate elevation, Popery dared to lay on the world the galling weight of the Inquisition. We may presumptuously doubt, or even deny, the existence of an Evil Spirit; but on what other hypothesis can we account for the horrid cruelties of this inexorable tribunal? For six hundred years it continued its career of imprisonment, burning, and slaughter, with more than savage ferocity. And though the pall of “middle and utter darkness” covers the era of its origin; still, its lighted fires mount up, at intervals, and tower above the gloom, revealing, with intense reality, the naked form of the fiend enveloped and enthroned in a circle of agony and flame. What are we

to think of the *religion* that could create, sanction, and use such an instrument of torture? And what may we expect will be the punishment inflicted on the nation by whom it is an adoption? A full and satisfactory answer to this question may be given, by simply recording the history of Roman Catholicism in France, Spain, England, and Ireland.

No one, who is conversant with her history, can doubt, that the ruin of France was wrought, directly, by the corrupting influence of the Roman Catholic religion. The successive steps that led her into the fearful volcano of the French revolution, may be traced, with the utmost certainty, to the very edge of the crater. The first, and most decisive, was the expulsion of Protestantism. Its presence in France had long restrained the captious spirit of infidelity, and smoothed down the rigorous asperities of Popery. Even among that fickle and profligate people, the true religion had stood, like its illustrious Author in the wilderness, spurning the tempter and putting his proudest temptation to shame. Its banishment was followed by the most ominous, immediate, and palpable premonitions of ruin. The whole nation was suddenly convulsed with bitter personal disputes, between Jesuit and Jansenist, fighting, even to mutual persecution, upon topics, either beyond or beneath the human intellect. The arguments of the Jesuit were the dungeon and the sword; against which his antagonist could marshal only the pretended miracles of hirelings and imposters. When the Church of Rome boasts of her freedom from schism, she should blot the eighteenth century from her page.

The French mind, subtle, satirical, and delighting to turn even matters of seriousness into ridicule, was immeasurably captivated by the true burlesque, and the childish virulence of those extravagant disputants.

In the midst of the general tempest, an extraordinary man arose, to guide and deepen it into public ruin. Holding an elevated rank in all the manlier provinces of mind, he was yet a personal profligate, and a prince of scorners. The splenetic pleasantry which stimulates the taste; the grossness which, half concealed, captivates the loose; and the easy brilliancy which throws a delusive coloring over the darker features of its purpose, made Voltaire the very genius of France. But, under this smooth and sparkling surface, reflecting, like a faithful mirror, the bewildering lights that fell upon it, was a depth of depravity, dark, stagnant, and fathomless. He hated man, despised government, loathed morals, and abhorred the very name of religion. Nor can the fact be disguised, that religion, such as Voltaire saw it, in the contending sects of the Gallican Church, deserved his supreme abhorrence. He had been induced, by their contentions, to examine into the nature of their claims; which he found to be utterly groundless. Like the prophet, he drew aside the veil of the temple, and looked upon the hideous abominations of the shrine. But, instead of the righteous indignation of the prophet, he came forth, exulting in his power, to blacken all religion by the smoke of its abuses, and published his discovery to the world. His attack on the religion of France, changed the burlesque of Jesuit and Jansenist to a real battle between infidelity and popery. But the warfare was totally unequal. The priesthood came armed with the antiquated and unwieldy weapons of old controversy—forgotten traditions and exhausted legends. These were fresh food for the scorn of infidelity. The Bible itself, which they had labored to close, was brought into the contest, and used resistlessly against the priesthood. They were contemptuously asked, In what part of the sacred record

they had found the worship of the Virgin, of the Saints, or of the Host? Where the privilege that conferred saintship at the hands of the Pope? Where the prohibition of the general use of Scripture by every man who had a soul to be saved? Where the revelation of that Purgatory, from which a monk and a mass could extract a sinner? Where the command to imprison, torture, and slay men, for differing in opinion with an Italian priest, or the college of cardinals? To these formidable questions the clerics answered, as usual, by angry complaints and pretended miracles. A perpetual ridicule of the national belief was kept alive, till the whole populace of France was prepared for rebellion, and her terrible and fated visitation began. The impurity which had long been festering in the Church, now spread with contagious rapidity, undermining and consuming away the foundations of public strength, and finally flaming out in the French Revolution. There never *was* an *effect* more strikingly demonstrative of its *cause*; nor *can* the revolution be accounted for on other, or more satisfactory principles, than those involved in the above remarks. No disastrous war had tried the strength of the nation; no prodigal expenditure of resources had exhausted her treasury. The country was in a state of profound peace with surrounding kingdoms, and the king was a man of singular lenity and liberality. He had granted much to the demands of popular representatives, and was prepared to grant up to the fullest demands of rational freedom. And yet, before a drop of blood was shed on the scaffold, or in the field, *he* was dethroned, and the government was given to Anarchy.

There certainly existed no original anathema against the people of France, as a nation. For brilliant discoveries, in almost every department of research, they have manifested

a peculiar aptitude. Their general accomplishments and national urbanity, ought to have made their history the happiest ; but, the truth is, it rivals the records of the most unfortunate nation of the world. Their unquestioned valor, their love of enterprise, and their physical qualities for soldiership, should have made their successes the most certain ; yet, no nation of people has wasted its blood with such fruitless gallantry—none has so often felt the bitterest reverses of fortune. Who can doubt, that her deep and protracted sufferings were intended as a scourge for her national impiety ?

The Republic was at length enthroned. Power, resistless and remorseless, was at its disposal ; and, in the midst of celebrations of prodigal pomp, immeasurable impurity, and blood flowing night and day from a hundred scaffolds, the deluded populace of France filled the cup of their horrors by making a public bonfire of the Bible. Ruin now assailed them in every conceivable shape. For nearly a quarter of a century, while the phrenzy of unprincipled leaders, the fiery impulses of popular passion, and the wild and startling crimes of palaces and prisons, were sweeping before their eyes with the fearful rapidity of feverish dreams, that bleeding and suffering nation continued to buffet the waves of revolution, till, having exhausted her strength, she came forth at last from the angry conflict, still loaded with chains, and writhing under the pressure of multiplied misfortunes. The reason is obvious. They possessed, in a high degree, the ultimate elements of strength ; but, they lacked the moral principle which might have caused them to coalesce into happy and harmonious union. As the motions of an immense engine, possessing tremendous power, may be regulated by a proper balance ; so may the movements of the civil machine be governed and restrained. In France, the

controlling agency was removed; and by its own innate powers of self-propulsion, the mighty machinery of state soon scattered its rolling and flying wheels in a thousand directions.

We turn from the history of religious corruption in France, to review its progress and influence in Spain. Here was the principal seat of the Inquisition. With the racks and fires of a tribunal worthy of the gulf of darkness, whence it rose, Popery was borne triumphantly into the Spanish dominions—was *there* received, and became the adopted religion of the nation.

We will not attempt to enumerate the desperate atrocities of the Spanish Inquisition. Its guilty triumphs were similar to those already described, but all on an incomparably larger scale. The menacing spectre put on a fiercer physiognomy, and moved with a march of ruin that traversed the globe by continents and oceans. Not satisfied with dominion over the land, a tribunal was established on board the Spanish fleets.*

Inflated with success on the continent, Popery now resolved to subvert the throne of England, and thus destroy the last refuge of Christianity. For that purpose the "invincible Armada" was launched. England was the victim which monkery had longed, above all others, to lay bare and cut to the heart, a vast untasted prey for the burning jaws, on which the gore of Europe had begun to dry. If that assault had been successful, the whole Popish vengeance would have been fearlessly developed, in the death of law, liberty, and religion. The Dominican would have usurped the British throne, and, clad in robes crimsoned with the blood of innocence, would have disclosed, with unblushing front, the torture of the secret rack.

* The Armada.

But the throne of England was not subverted. Wreck, burning, and capture—man and the elements, were all let loose together on the Spanish forces, and in four and twenty hours, the Armada was undone, and with it the crown of Spain was cloven. Her intrinsic strength kept the government together, for a time; but her final and complete subversion was inevitable, and, from the day of her defeat by England, she was marked as the alternate prize and victim of invasion.

Without extending these specifications, we may remark, in one word, that every solitary nation of Europe has been *soured* with a severity proportionate to her religious corruption.

There never was, perhaps, a period of deeper debasement, or of more general lewdness, than the middle of the fourteenth century. It is equally true, that the hand of ruin never wielded a keener blade, or mowed down, with an ampler sweep, the ripening and waving harvest of the world. In the midst of the havoc of armies, the all-prevalent "Plague" rolled over the face of Europe, with the regular and resistless advance of a sea. Wave on wave of death covered the successive kingdoms, till the whole continent, from Rome to the Orkneys, was one wide festering sepulchre.

A glance at the British history, since the reformation, will exemplify the truth we are laboring to elucidate; more clearly, if possible, than even the nations on the continent.

In England, every attempt to elevate Popery to the throne, or even to give it an amount of influence having a tendency to trammel, in any degree, the operations of the true religion, has been marked with signal disaster. It is a striking circumstance, that almost every reign of this Popish tendency, ~~has~~ been followed by one purely

Protestant. And, as if to make the cause of the national peril plain to all eyes, these alternate reigns have not offered a stronger contrast in their principles, than in their public fortunes. Let the rank of England be what it might under the Protestant sovereign, it always sank under the Popish: let its loss of honor, or of power, be ever so great under the Popish sovereign, it invariably recovered under the Protestant. We pass at once to the proof.

The Protestant faith was first thoroughly established in England, in the reign of Elizabeth. Mary had left a dilapidated kingdom. The nation was worn out with disaster and debt; the national arms were disgraced; and nothing but Popery exhibited the marks of vigor. At the very opening of her reign, Elizabeth was surrounded with distressing embarrassments. The ports of a country, destined to command the commerce of the world, were shipless pools; the skill of a country, destined to fill the world with the wonders of industry, was scarcely able to cover its shivering population from the common inclemency of the seasons; the soil of a country, destined to display the richest agriculture of the globe, barely fed its scattered peasantry; the genius of a country, destined to give a Milton to mankind, and almost to mark the limits of the human intellect, by a Bacon and a Newton, was wasted in the drivelling disputes of the Cloister, and the profane miracles of the Breviary. Even the bold and generous spirit which was destined to break the fetters of the mind, and guide the natural impulses of man to liberty, wasted its blood in foreign wars, or, still more ignobly, in contests at home. All was licentious indulgence, and sullen despondency.

When the "Virgin Queen" ascended the throne of England, a numerous party, including the most influential

names of the kingdom, was hostile alike to her succession and her religion. Abroad, the hostility assumed even a more menacing attitude. France was infusing rebellion into Scotland; Rome was exciting the Irish to sedition; and Spain, commanding almost the entire strength of Europe, was roused against her by the double stimulant of ambition and bigotry. But the cause of Elizabeth was the cause of the true religion, and in that "sign" she conquered. By successive and vigorous blows, she paralyzed the power of Rome, and shivered the Spanish sword; giving freedom to the Dutch, and the Bible to the world. But her great work was the establishment of Protestantism. Like the Jewish king, she found the Ark of God without a shelter; and, making her own country its temple, she lived to see the descending glory rest upon it; then died, in the fulness of years and honor, her name and her reign alike immortal.

Charles the First, ascended a prosperous throne. England was at peace with foreign powers; faction was feeble, or extinct, at home; and her commerce traversed the world of waters with the boldness of manly adventure. But Charles betrayed the sacred trust of the true religion. He formed a Popish alliance, with the full knowledge that it established a Popish dynasty. Ill fortune suddenly gathered upon him. Distracted councils, and popular feuds, met by alternate weakness and violence, the loss of national respect; and a civil war, finally deepening into bloodshed, combined to punish the guilty betrayal.

Cromwell's was the sceptre of a broken kingdom. Riot and rebellion were less rending, than *tearing* the strength of England in sunder. Whatever may have been the motives of the Protector, the policy of the Commonwealth was Protestantism. England was instantly lifted on her feet as if by the power of miracle. All her

adventures were conquests; all her battles were victories. Growing, year by year, in opulence, public knowledge, and foreign renown, she soon became the most conspicuous power in Europe. Cromwell had resolved "to make the name of an Englishman as much feared and respected as the name of an ancient Roman." He almost realized the splendid improbability.

Charles the Second ascended an eminently prosperous throne. Abroad, England held an elevated rank; at home, all faction was forgotten in the general joy of the restoration. But Charles was secretly* a Roman Catholic. He attempted to introduce his religion, and the star of England was instantly darkened. The country and the king, alike, became the scorn of foreign courts; the national honor was scandalized by mercenary subserviency to France; the national pride was humiliated by a disastrous war with Holland; numerous and still thickening graves disclosed the footprints of pestilence; which had scarcely retired, when a memorable conflagration hunted out the palace of the King, and left it, together with half the capital of England, in ashes.

James the Second still more openly violated the national trust, by publicly celebrating the bloody rights of Romanism.† This filled the cup of treachery, and England cast out the Stuarts—they and their dynasty for ever.

William was called to the throne. He found it, as it always had been found at the close of a Popish reign, surrounded by a host of difficulties. Popery was every where rising and girding itself for battle. Fierce disturbance prevailed in Scotland; open war existed in

* He had solemnly professed Popery on the eve of his restoration.

† Macaulay's History of England.

Ireland, while the French King was domineering over Europe, and threatening England with invasion. But William's banner was "lifted up," in the name of the true religion; and, to him, as to all his predecessors, it was strength and victory. He silenced English faction; crushed the Irish war; and, assailed in its own dominions, the colossal strength of France. This was the direct collision, not so much of the two kingdoms as of the two religions. The Protestant champion stood in the field, against the Popish persecutor. If ever the contest occurred between the Shepherd, with staff and sling, and the giant of Gath, armed and panoplied for the strife, it was then. In a train of immortal victories, the Prince of Orange defended the pure faith throughout the nations of Europe; and, before he sheathed his sword, drove monkery to its dungeon door, and broke the power of France for a hundred years.

The Brunswick line was called to the throne, on the sole title of Protestantism. Under the administration of each of those illustrious kings, the country was led up, step by step, to higher and still higher degrees of prosperity. Every trivial reverse was compensated by some magnificent addition of honor and power, till the throne of England occupied a height from which her kings looked down upon the world.

Yet, in our own immediate memory, there was one remarkable interruption of her progress, which, if the most total contrast with the periods preceding and following amounts to an argument, proves, beyond evasion, that the adoption of an idolatrous religion will be visited as a national crime.

During the war of the French Republic, England was signalized by a succession of brilliant victories, without a parallel in the history of arms. But the death

of her great statesman opened the door to a new administration.*

It was, in truth, 'the Roman Catholic Administration.' There never was, in the memory of man, a change from triumph to disaster, so sudden and appalling. Defeat came upon England in every possible form and shape in which it could assail a nation. All her expeditions returned with disgrace. The British arms were tarnished in the *four quarters of the globe*.† And, as if to make the cause of defeat palpable to the eyes of her guilty ministry, the English fleet was disgraced by a barbarian, without a ship on the waters, and finally hunted out of his seas by discharges from batteries crumbling under the weight of their own cannon.

But the fame of the British empire was not to be thus cheaply wasted. The ministry made its promised attempt on the constitution, which was met by Perceval, with merited reprobation. His whole life had been an unconscious preparation for that perilous moment. His early political connections had led him close enough to Popery, to see that, like Milton's sin, it was

" Woman to the waist and fair
But ending foul in many a scaly fold."

His eloquence, the finest and most singular combination of magnificent fancy and profound philosophy, here found a region for its fullest development. Rising, on a strong and tireless wing—the eyes of Europe fixed on his rapid and brilliant elevation, he gathered new strength, like cloud on cloud, touched with all the glorious colorings of heaven,

* February, 1806.

† The retreat from Sweden, 1807. Egypt invaded and evacuated, 1807. Whitlock sent to Buenos Ayres, 1807. Duckworth's repulse at Constantinople, 1807.

and charged with tempest, till his eloquence raged a storm, and poured down the torrents and the thunder. He moved, among the malignant and querulous declaimers of the British parliament, a giant among pigmies. He smote their Babel into dust; flung cavil and confusion into their ranks; and, as a reward for his manly defence of the true religion, he saw the Popish ministry of one month and one year, loaded with public indignation, and sinking, suddenly, to a grave of abhorred memory, amidst the general rejoicing of mankind.

Their successors were, emphatically, "The Protestant Administration." They had scarcely entered upon office, when the whole scene of disaster brightened up, and the deliverance of Europe was begun with a vigor that never relaxed, till England saw the "monarch of monarchs," a prisoner in her hands, and the mighty fabric of the French Atheistic Empire, which was darkening and distending, like an endless dungeon over the earth, scattered, with all its malignant pomps and ministers of evil, into air.

It is impossible to conceive, that this regular interchange of punishment and preservation, has been without a cause, or, without a purpose. Through almost three hundred years, through all varieties of public change, and all shades of public polity, we see only one thing unchanged—the regular connection of national misfortune with the introduction of Popish influence, and of national triumph with its exclusion. The proof is inferior only to demonstration: that the general abandonment of a purely spiritual devotion, and the adoption of a corrupt religion, was, in the case of England, invariably visited as a national crime.

Ireland affords another illustrious example, of a nation scourged for the corruption of religion.

When the greatest painter of England sought to concentrate, in one scene, the deepest agonies of our nature, he grouped together a father and his children famishing. It is true, that the father was represented as being in prison; but what were his fetters? and what the airless gloom and impassable height of his prison walls, compared to the living miseries around him—his children clinging to his knees, and hanging on his neck, with an embrace strong even in death, and fixing their last gaze on a countenance, whence all expression had fled, leaving, exposed, the naked features of despair?

The peasant fact surpasses the fiction of the pencil. Misfortune, on so wide a scale, as the late famine of Ireland, never before met the eyes of the world. It less resembles reality, than the highest terrors of Milton's imagination.

“ Immediately, a place
Before his eyes appeared, sad, noisome, dark.
A lazaret-house it seemed, wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseased; all maladies
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
Of heart-sick agonies, all feverous kinds,
Demoniac frenzy, weeping melancholy,
Moroseness and wide-wasting pestilence,
Dire was the tossing, deep the groans.”

In the closest connection with one of the first Christian nations of the globe, Ireland is yet immersed in all the horrors of religious thralldom. Standing within sight of that ocean of opulence, which, for hundreds of years, has made England the emporium of the earth, she still serves the purpose of a cipher in the calculations of commerce. Living on an Island, the most genial and picturesque that ever imbibed the rains, or basked in the sun-showers of heaven, the Irish people are still abased by the sentence of hereditary misfortune. Her crowded dungeons and

groaning scaffolds, present, to the view of foreigners, a picture of horror, surpassed only by the sight of her unburied mortality. What *cause* can be assigned for a visitation so searching, protracted, and severe?

Is it because the Irish people do not possess the elements of true greatness? If natural qualities are to determine public fortunes, we know of no people more fitted to run the race of national honor. Without the extravagance of panegyric, we give utterance only to public sentiment, in attributing, even to their lower orders, great quickness of capacity—a temperament that bears the rough hand of fortune with astonishing endurance; a vivid sensibility to kindness; and a heart which seldom falters in the day of danger. In their more educated ranks, these qualities have taken a higher flight, and have soared, wing to wing, with the boldest orators of England. When we see the celebrity which has been reached by the men of Ireland, in foreign countries—their names among the brightest jewels of foreign diadems, we cannot believe, that their present condition results from any limited bestowment upon them by nature, of the essential elements of greatness.

Is there any thing connected with the locality of Ireland unfavorable to greatness? As the great port of the western world, in its communication with Europe, Ireland occupies a position inferior to that of no other nation. And yet, though her soil possesses a high degree of fertility, and an unbounded store of mineral opulence; though her climate is healthy, and her harbors more numerous than those of the whole continent of Europe; still, with all these advantages, it has ever been the fate of that fine, but unfortunate country, to see her brightest prospects suddenly blighted, and that, too, without a discoverable cause. Her ship has constantly

gone down at its anchor; and the ground, which seemed firm as a rock, has, invariably, crumbled at every effort that has been made to raise upon it any fabric of public prosperity. In later days, a chasm has opened in her Forum, which neither the wealth of the British Empire, nor the sagacity of the British Parliament, has been able to close. The world has watched the edges of that gulf advancing toward England, and statesmen have fixed a time, when all her temples and tribunals will topple—they and the throne disclosing their foundations together. Why has every effort, on the part of England, to close that threatening chasm, only served to widen the breach?

Is it because the acts of Parliament have been wanting in vigor—not to say in severity? The disease is beyond the reach of human legislation. All the fetters ever forged by Parliament, might be heaped on Ireland without bending her haughty spirit into unwilling submission. The subtle and elastic principle of her tameless sons, has constantly wound itself out of every shackle, and startled English authority in some new shape of revenge. Where force cannot crush, it irritates; where knowledge cannot enlighten, it inflames. Her disease is a moral malady, and her suffering is the result of an established law. Hence the failure of every remedy prescribed by the British Parliament for her inveterate complaint. But there is *one* championship, and one only; which, clothed in the armor of heaven, can propitiate the wrath, and check the ruin.

We have not been able to discover the existence of any peculiar influence in the atmosphere, or soil, of Ireland, calculated to dwarf those buoyant intellects which, set on another strand, have so often excited the admiration, and achieved the deliverance of empire. We have not been able to discover any thing in her particular locality, unfavorable to the fullest development of her energies, or

adverse to the fullest enjoyment of unrivalled prosperity. On the contrary, we discover in her natural resources, a bestowment of peculiar advantage. And yet, we see her prosperity continually interrupted. We see her bowed down before an invisible enemy, and compelled to acknowledge the utter helplessness of all human means, before a drop of malignant dew, a breath of poisoned wind, or the fang of a microscopic worm.

It might be possible to show, in the case of Ireland, that even the instrument of her punishment points directly to its purpose. War, pestilence, and famine, may be made to scourge a nation with equal severity; but, when the purpose is national reform, famine is certainly the most effective instrumentality. We will state a few of the most obvious reasons.

Famine is more evidently, than either war or pestilence, an immediate visitation of Providence. To the multitude, pestilence may seem only a more fearful shape of casual disease. Royal ambition, or popular folly, may be assigned as the cause of war. But, the origin of famine cannot be mistaken. The frowning heavens, the blighting atmosphere, and the dust-driving winds which smite the earth with barrenness, and sweep away the hopes of harvest, are all weapons beyond the wielding of man.

Famine is more calculated, than either war or pestilence, to humble the heart of man. War nerves the arm for *strife*, and fills the heart with *revenge*. Pestilence fills their minds with horror, and drives the profligate to prison. But famine is lonely and sorrowful. It enters the domestic circle, and sheds a silent shade on the face of filial tenderness, and clouds, with ominous gloom, the brow of paternal affection. It stills the turbulence of passion and humbles the proudest heart.

Famine is usually more comprehensive as a scourge, than pestilence or war. Its silent tread extinguishes the concourse of the city; crushes the population of the province; and deepens the general dismay, till all is death.

And, finally : Famine is the fittest instrument of Divine chastisement, when the purpose is national reform; because its approach is always gradual. The pathway of pestilence is emphatically, "*in darkness.*" It finds its victim "reeling in waltz or quadrille," and delivers its message with scarcely a moment's warning. War may waste at "noon-day," giving ample indications of its coming; but the frantic fury of the multitude, and the general fermentation of all classes of society, utterly unfit the nation for either repentance or reform. Famine gives time for humiliation, and brings a sadness and subduing of heart, peculiarly suited to inspire a feeling of penitence. The nation thus brought to its knees, with a clear understanding, and a heart made sensitive by suffering, is forced to see and feel, that the hand which punishes is Divine.

We have finished our review of Ireland. We have faintly represented her deep and protracted suffering. And, as no natural cause can be assigned for her multiplied misfortunes, we are driven to the conclusion, that they are the result of her religious corruption.

But whatever may be the lot of those to whom error is an inheritance, woe be to the people by whom it is an adoption. If America, free above all nations, sustained amidst the trials which have covered the earth with burning and slaughter, and enlightened by the fullest knowledge of the Divine will, refuse fidelity to the compact by which those matchless privileges have been given, her condemnation will neither be distant nor delayed. But,

if she faithfully repel this deepest of all crimes, and refuse to place Popery, side by side, with Christianity, there may be no bound to the sacred magnificence of her preservation. The coming terrors and tribulations of the earth may but augment her glory. Even in the midst of thunderings and lightnings, which appal the tribes of earth, she may be led up, like the Prophet, to the Mount, only to behold the Eternal Majesty; and when the visitation has past, the world may see her coming forth from the cloud, her brow blazing, and her hands holding the "commandments" of mankind.

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